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ANNALS OF ULSTER;

OR,

IRELAND FIFTY YEARS AGO.

COMPILED BY

MR. SAMUEL M'SKIMIN,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF CARRICKFERGUS."

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ANNALS

OF

IRISH HISTORY.

For several years previous to the arrival of Earl Fitzwilliam as chief governor of this kingdom, in 1795, the northern counties of Ulster had been deeply agitated by a series of political events. However, on his lordship entering upon his goverment, the murmurings of the disaffected seemed allayed; rumour, with her hundred tongues, proclaiming a redress of the greivancescom plained of. A reform in the Commons House of Parliament was pronounced as certain; Roman Catholic emancipation, which had become a popular measure, was deemed equally sure, and even the vexatious exaction of tithes, was said to be on the eve of modification. The press teemed with eulogiums on this favourite viceroy; his portrait graced the monthly publications of the capital; while many conceived that they beheld, in the distance, a better order of things.

On the 24th of January, a meeting of the Protestant inhabitants of Belfast was held in the meeting-house of the third Dissenting congregation, Charles Rankin, Esq., in the chair, when a petition to parliament was agreed to in favour of the total emancipation of the Roman Catholics of this kingdom. On a committee being appointed to prepare a petition, they retired for a short time, returned, and said—they were unable to form a more fit petitition than that adopted by the town in January, 1792, which was then produced, read, and approved of by a large majority, as that of the meeting. On the 2nd of February, this petition, with upwards of 1000 signatures, was presented to the House of Commons by the Right Hon. Henry

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Grattan; and also the petition of the Roman Catholics of the county of Antrim, praying for farther relief.

While plans were also in forwardness for carrying other popular measures into effect, Earl Fitzwilliam was unexpectedly recalled from his government. Never, perhaps, did any act of a British Cabinet, towards Ireland, produce so deep a sensation. The latent embers of disaffection were immediately fanned into a flame by the *United Irishmen*, many of whom, while they bitterly complained of his recal, secretly contemplated it as a providential auxiliary to their schemes.

For some time after, pains were taken to inflame the public mind by the speeches delivered, and resolutions entered into at county, and other meetings, and in the addresses to his Excellency regarding his removal. In Belfast, a numerous meeting of the inhabitants took place on the 4th of March, who voted an address to his lordship, and deputed three of their body to present the same to him in Dublin. It was also agreed that the day of his departure from the kingdom should be observed as one of "National Mourning," and, on the 25th of March, not a shop or counting-house was open in that town—all seemed one scene of sullen indignation. [a]

On the same day a meeting of the freeholders of the county of Antrim took place at Carrickfergus, Hugh Boyd, Esq., one of the members of parliament for the said county, in the chair, Mr. Luke Teeling, secretary. The resolutions entered into by them was expressive of their regret at the recal of Earl Fitzwilliam, and their fears "that the venal, profuse, and tyrannical

[a] Earl Fitzwilliam arrived in Dublin on the 5th of January, 1795, and retired from office on the 25th of March in the same year. Earl Camden, his successor, arrived in Dublin on the 31st of the same month, and was immediately sworn into office at the castle. The carriages of the Lord Chancellor, the Primate, and several others known to have been hostile to the measures of Earl Fitzwilliam, were pelted with stones by the mob on their return from the Council Chamber. The Chancellor received a blow of a stone on his forehead, and his house was attacked, as were the houses of Alderman Warren, and J. C. Beresford; but some of the mob being made prisoners, and one of them being killed by a shot from the house of the latter, they dispersed.

The provost, fellows, and scholars of Trinity College, afterwards proceeded in a body to the castle, in order to present a complimentary address to his Excellency. On their arrival at the gate the scholars suddenly wheeled about and retired to Hyde's coffee-house, where Mr. Thomas Moore, since distinguished as a poet, being called to the chair, and W. H. Ellis appointed secretary, an address was voted to the Right Hon. Henry Grattan, expressive of their approbation of his principles and conduct during the late administration.—*Northern Star.*

measures of a former administration" were to be persevered in. They likewise declared, that his lordship had, by his purposed measures, proved himself the true friend of Ireland, "by associating, in his councils, men of virtue and talent;" and they expressed their determination to employ every constitutional means in their power to obtain the two great objects, "so essentially necessary to the peace, safety, and happiness of Ireland—complete Catholic emancipation, and a radical reform in the representation of the people." An address was also voted to his Excellency, which the chairman was instructed to forward to him.

Two days afterwards a numerous meeting of the Roman Catholics of the same county was held in the town of Antrim, Mr. Luke Teeling, chairman, Mr. Charles H. Teeling, secretary. They also expressed their sorrow at the recal of Earl Fitzwilliam, to whom they resolved to present an address, in which they said—"As friends to mankind we regret your departure from power, as Irishmen we deplore the misfortune to our country, and dread a revival of that system of monopoly and disunion so fatally experienced." In their resolutions they complimented the volunteers, whom they called "THE IMMORTAL VOLUNTEERS OF ULSTER,"[b] and declared that

[b] These high compliments to the volunteers of Ulster could only relate to those who, two years before, had been prohibited from appearing in arms by the government, in consequence of their notorious disaffection, and, therefore, would probably have been spared, only that the parties had now sinister purposes in view.

The volunteers of 1778-79, and for some years after, evinced no particular interest about Roman Catholic affairs, nor were they admitted into their ranks. Dr. Dickson, in his *Narrative*, informs us, that such as offered to become volunteers in his neighbourhood (Portaferry), were even insulted; and the Rev. John Wesley, in his *Journal*, mentions first seeing some volunteer companies at Cork, and remarks that, "if they answer no other end, they will at least keep the Papists in order."

In 1778, we find the two Belfast companies of volunteers, the first embodied in the kingdom, celebrating the 1st of July with three vollies, and on the 4th November firing a *feu-de-joi* in honour of King William III.'s birth day; and on the following day the like rejoicing took place in memory of the frustration of the Gunpowder-plot. On this night the play of "Tamerlaine" was usually acted at the theatre in that town, volunteers attending in full dress. On these occasions the tunes of the "Boyne Water" and "Prussian Drum" were their favourite quicksteps, and orange lilies, or orange cockades, were worn in their hats or caps. So lately as November, 1791, the Dublin volunteers paraded round the statute of William III. in College Green, but in November, 1792, they "abolished orange cockades," and adopted green. In October, 1784, a Civil Convention was held in Dublin, entitled, "The Assembly of Delegates for promoting a parliamentary reform," William Sharman, Esq., chairman, John T. Ashenhurst, secretary, where it was determined not to embarrass the cause of reform by the introduc-

they would *unite* with their Protestant brethren in every legal and constitutional means for promoting the good of the nation. On the 29th of the same month, a meeting of the Roman Catholics of Belfast was held in their chapel, who, after expressing their regret for the departure of Earl Fitzwilliam, in their resolutions they said—"We will cordially *unite* with our Protestant brethren, on all and every occasion, to resist such insults to our *national independence*, whether the attack come from a *British Cabinet* or Irish incendaries,—and that we will henceforward co-operate with them, in all due means, in obtaining that great national object—a representation of the people in the legislature, without which, it is our belief, we can never be prosperous as a nation, or happy as a people." A few days previous, a meeting of the Roman Catholics of the county of Down was held in Downpatrick, John O'Neill, Esq., Banville, in the chair, who entered into resolutions similar to those of their brethren of Antrim.

Up to this period the great body of the Roman Catholics throughout the northern counties of Ulster had kept aloof from secret associations. [c] They appeared even loyal, firmly attached to the throne, and grateful to the legislature for the repeal of some of the most hateful of the penal statutes;—and until this time the *United Irishmen* were rather formidable from the talents and activity of those leagued, than from their numbers. By the recal of Earl Fitzwilliam a powerful stimulus had been given to the exertions of the disaffected, yet Roman Catholic emancipation and Parliamentary Reform were continued as the watch-words, while the ancient bias between Protestant and Roman Catholic, on the score of religion, seemed lost in the vortex of affected liberality.

tion of any question about the claims of Roman Catholics to have votes for members to serve parliament—thus throwing, as it were, their claims overboard.—*Belfast News-Letter; Life of Theobald. W. Tone; Belfast Mercury.*

[c] We believe the only exceptions were in the baronies of Upper and Lower Iveagh, county of Down, but particularly in the neighbourhood of Rathfriland, where a savage warfare was kept up between the *defenders* and *peep-o'-day-boys*, alias, *break-o'-day-boys*, each party accusing the other of being the aggressor. In May, 1792, the Rev. Samuel Barber, and some other gentlemen, interesting themselves to put an end to those scenes of rapine and murder, a peace was made between the parties, who agreed "to forgive and forget all past injuries and insults, and to be good friends"—but they soon after flew to arms.—*Northern Star*, May, 1792.

Notwithstanding the friendly dispositions evinced in the numerous addresses to Earl Fitzwilliam, it is more than probable that had he been continued for a few weeks longer in his government, he would have retired as unpopular as many of his predecessors. The leaders of the *United Irishmen* were openly bent on annual parliaments, universal sufferage, and "that no property qualification should be necessary to entitle any man to be a representative."[d] However popular, it is certain that these measures would not have been acceded to by the government, and hence the clamour would have been continued by our embryo Marats, Dantons, and Robespierres. It has also been asserted, that had the ostensible objects of the *Union* been complied with, the progress of civil war would have been arrested—and to those but partially versed in the sayings and doings of the four preceding years, this may seem a plausible tale. A brief retrospect of the leading facts, however, removes this delusion, and these facts we shall here endeavour to point out, from which the candid reader will be enabled to judge, whether they were not more nearly allied to French revolutionary principles, than Roman Catholic emancipation, and a reform in the legislature.

In the spring of 1791, the public mind appeared sunk into a passive indifference with regard to domestic politics. Many of the most ardent friends of reform, disgusted with the wild reveries of their colleagues, had relinquished the pursuit, and, as for Roman Catholic emancipation, it was little talked of beyond the precincts of Belfast. The volunteer associations, which had been declining from 1785, were become nearly extinct—their field-days and reviews were discontinued;—while the political proceedings in the north were confined to those of the *Northern Whig Club*, which met in Belfast, but were little mentioned beyond the columns of a newspaper.[e]

[d] In the address of the society of *United Irishmen* of Dublin to the Irish nation, dated January 25th, 1793, signed, William Drennan, chairman, Archibald H. Rowan, secretary, they declare—"ix. That every male of sound mind, who has attained the full age of 21 years," and dwelt six months previous to the election in the county, should be entitled to vote for a representative in parliament. "xvi. That parliaments should be annual." "xxi. That no property qualification should be necessary to entitle any man to be a representative."

[e] This club was established in Belfast on the 17th of March, 1790, on the suggestion of the Earl of Charlemont, and soon after a similar club was

The common apathy with regard to domestic politics was, however, amply made up by the interest excited regarding those of the French—though it was soon evident that the mob of Paris, guided by a few men of restless ambition, were, in reality, the principal legislators. So early as 1790, a correspondence with France had been opened by some democratic emissaries,[f] while the barbarous means by which the French Revolution was carried on and effected, if not always praised, were yet pronounced to be justified by the end, and their example held forth as a glorious pattern for the imitation of mankind.[g]

With the general admiration of the movements in France were introduced an influx of wild and levelling opinions, and hence republican principles and a desire of change became equally prevalent; and, in order to give a warlike impulse to those feelings, on the 14th of July, 1791, the French Revolution was celebrated in Belfast with considerable *eclat*. At two o'clock the two volunteer companies of that town assembled at the Exchange, and, on completing their arrangements, they moved in procession through the principal streets. Their rear was brought up by the *Northern Whig Club*, and a great number of the inhabitants wearing green cockades. In their ranks flags were borne, on which were painted portraits of M. Mirabeau, Dr. Ben. Franklin, &c., and on a large standard was a representation of the releasement of the prisoners from

formed at Ballymoney. They really seem to have been very lukewarm reformers, as at their first general meeting in Belfast, only 27 members were present, 24 being absent. About 34 of the original members belonged to the counties of Down and Antrim. One of their standing toasts was—"The glorious and immortal memory of William III.;"—and the Roman Catholic question was excluded from their subjects of discussion.—*Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.* Vol. I., p. 199.

[f] The political history of Europe for the year 1790.

[g] Sir Richard Musgrave, in his *memoirs* of the different rebellions in Ireland, states, that in 1791-2, Rabaude de St. Etienne, the bosom friend of Brissot, the famous leader of the Girondine party, in the French National Assembly, passed some time between Dublin and Belfast, "sowing the seeds of future combustion." Before the Revolution, this gentleman was a Protestant minister at Nismes, in Languedoc. He was a violent and universal reformer, and declared that "all ancient establishments were a nuisance, and in respect to the people, we ought," said he, "to renew their minds, to change their ideas, their laws, their manners; to change men, things, words; in fine, to destroy everything, that we may create everything anew." The revolutionary tribunal of Paris, acting on the latter suggestion had him guillotined, on the 7th of December, 1793.—*Autobiography of A. H. Rowan*, p. 160.

the Bastile. Three *feu-de-joies* were fired by the infantry, which were answered by their artillery, and a declaration of the sentiments of the meeting on the French Revolution was ordered to be transmitted to the "French National Assembly," through their president, Colonel William Sharman. A long and fraternizing answer was soon after received from the president of that body, and also from the citizens of Bourdeaux and Nantz. It was intended, on this occasion, to have introduced a "collatoral resolution of admitting the Roman Catholics to the right of citizenship, which was, however, withdrawn, from an apprehension that the minds of those present were not yet prepared for the measure."[h]

On the 14th of October, the first society of *United Irishmen* was formed in Belfast, William Simms, secretary, to which society was attached a select, or secret committee, consisting of the following gentlemen:—William Sinclair, Samuel M'Tier, William M'Cleery, Thomas M'Cabe, William Simms, Robert Simms, Samuel Neilson, Henry Hazlett, William Tennent, John Campbell, Gilbert M'Ilveen, Theobald W. Tone, and Thomas Russell. The first declaration of the society was written out by Theobald W. Tone, an avowed republican, in which it was said,—"*We have no national government.*"[i] A few weeks after, 19th of December, a similar society was established at Templepatrick, and on the following day, another at Doagh, and about the same time at Randalstown, Killeade, and Muckamore. The first society of *United Irishmen*, in the county of Down, was installed at Saintfield, January 16th, 1792, under the auspices of the Rev. Thomas L. Birch, Liberty-hill, Presbyterian minister of Saintfield.[j]

In the mean time, January 4th, 1792, the *Northern Star* newspaper began to be published in Belfast, for the purpose of

[h] M'Nevin's pieces of Irish history.

[i] This memorable meeting was held at a house in the Crown-entry. On the 9th of November, a similar society was established in Dublin, the Hon. Simon Butter in the chair, James N. Tandy, secretary, who adopted the declaration of those of Belfast. They also resolved that the society be furnished with a seal, with a harp at the top, and the words, "I am new strung," and beneath, "I will be heard," and on the exerque, "Society of United Irishmen of Dublin."—*Life of Theobald W. Tone, American Edition*, Vol. I., p. 142.

[j] About this time Mr. Birch threw up his portion of the *Regium Donum*, then only about £10 per annum!—*Northern Star*, No. 4, and 10.

propagating the principles of the *United Irishmen*, "and finally, as the necessary, though not avowed, consequence of all this, to erect Ireland into a republic independent of England."[k] For the first year of its establishment, it was particularly directed to prepare the minds of the people for the rejection of regal government. Kings were pronounced tyrants, and "hereditary succession a burlesque upon monarchy;" and they were told that any rascal might be a lord; and were declared to have rights, while the rights of man were denied.[l] Those persons attached to the government were stigmatized as despots or aristocrats, and described as a pack of mean wretches, who wished the nation to be oppressed for the advantage of a few. A democrat was represented as a good fellow—one who merely desired "fair play, and equal protection to all;"[m] yet while they talked of liberty and independence, it was evident that the only liberty dealt out to others was that of adopting their plans.

The Revolution of 1688 was said not to deserve that name, and pains were taken to turn the same into contempt, and to excite a general expectation of a separation from Great Britain. The stability of the government was represented as founded on the ignorance of the people, and it was added, in Italics—"*It is too bad.*" The Constitution was likened to an old tree that had sheltered beneath its branches beasts of prey, and ought to be cut down as cumbering the ground. The lower classes were taught to expect some great and inevitable change, by which revolution was always plainly understood; and directions were given for the making of gunpowder, and for the use, in war, of missiles and hand weapons, and for the evolutions of battalions and squadrons.[n] The advantage of the pike, as a military weapon, was carefully explained, as "a safeguard against horsemen," and as "the most honourable of all weapons;" and pattern pikes, said to exactly resemble those used in the French armies, were handed about on volunteer parades for approval.[o]

[k] Life of Theobald W. Tone, Vol. I., p. 68.

[l] Northern Star, March 10th, 1792. [m] Northern Star, March 17th, 1792.

[n] Northern Star, April 1st, 1792, and December 12th, 1792.

[o] In the same month, the writer witnessed a newly-made pike, presented to a volunteer corps on parade, and it was said to resemble those used by the French. To the one side was attached a kind of small hatchet, and on the other side a sharp hook, which, he was informed, was for cutting the bridles

Following the great model, France, every art was used to seduce the military from their allegiance. The common soldiers were told that "the late pitiful advance that had been made to the army, in respect of pay and necessaries," bore no proportion to the advanced state of provisions. To their officers it was said—"every man knows that it is utterly impossible for gentlemen to live and to keep any kind of rank on three shillings, or three shillings and sixpence per day;" and, it was added, "they order these things better in France."[p] In Belfast, printed handbills were distributed among the soldiers, reflecting on the arbitrary nature of military service, and the same was also published in the *Northern Star* of December 8th, 1792. In this paper we also find the following invitation to mutiny:—"The brave and honourable soldiers of France refused to fire upon their fellow-citizens, when ordered by the slaves of arbitrary power; through their noble forbearance the nation became free, and their own lot rendered comfortable and respectable for ever. The Prussian soldiers, it is said, have lately evinced a similar disposition." Fabricated accounts of mutinies in the army were also, at all times, published in the same paper. In one of these, it was stated, that the regiment of "Scotch Greys" had joined the people, and had taken possession of the castle of Edinburgh without opposition;—that "the universal cry was, 'A REPUBLIC—NO KING;'" and that the soldiers refused "to fight against *liberty*, saying, they wanted it themselves, and thought they would be very ungrateful to injure those who supported them." At a meeting of the second society of *United Irishmen*, a few evenings after the pretended receipt of this news, one of their toasts was—"The Scotch Greys, and may all the military follow their example." At another time the Clare militia and 9th dragoons, then quartered in Dublin, were said to have refused to obey their officers,[q] which was equally untrue.

of horsemen, and pulling them off. In June, 1798, he saw several pikes of the same shape which were surrendered by the rebels.—*Northern Star*, December 12th, 1792.

In France the pike was early a revolutionary weapon. Just before the destruction of the Bastile, we find 50,000 pikes ordered to be made in Paris. —*Thier's History of the French Revolution*, Vol I., p. 52.

[p] Northern Star, November 28th, 1792.

[q] Northern Star, November 28th, 1792, and April, 1797.

On the 28th of January, 1792, a numerous meeting of the inhabitants of Belfast was held for the purpose of considering the propriety of a petition to parliament in favour of the Roman Catholic claims. The Rev. Sinclair Kelburne being called to the chair, an interesting debate took place, as to whether the petition should be for full and immediate, or progressive emancipation. The former proposal was at length carried by a large majority, and a petition to that effect signed by nearly 800 persons. From this decision, however, 265 gentlemen dissented, among whom were many of the most talented and influential persons in Belfast. At this meeting M. Le Blanc, a Frenchman, a tambour-worker, who was reported to be an emissary from France, made a short speech, in which he said, "it appeared to him no little ridiculous to see the inhabitants of a town deliberating about granting rights to others who had no rights themselves." February 8th, this petition was presented to the House of Commons by the Right Hon. John O'Neill, one of the members in parliament for the county of Antrim, when Sir Boyle Roche proceeded to load the petitioners with the most outrageous language. He said "their petition was an airy fabric, raised upon a sandy foundation, and had, for its basis, fraud and deceit, as it meant the very reverse of what it professed. They had," he said, "moved heaven and earth, in order to foment disturbance in the country; and, at the same time they were forming their petition in behalf of their *Catholic brethren*, they were holding a correspondence with the *French National Assembly*. Now the question is," he added, "whether we will receive the insidious petition of a turbulent, disorderly, set of people, whom—

'No king could govern—no God could please,'

or whether we shall treat it with its merited contempt. For my part, I call upon you to dispose of it as it deserves, by tossing it over the bar, and kicking it into the lobby." The petition, however, was received, with the single exception of the uncourtly knight, but its prayer was afterwards rejected by the House, when Sir Boyle said—"the sentiments of Roman Catholics was not to be culled from shop-keepers and

shop-lifters."[r] On the 18th of February, Mr. O'Neill also presented to the House a petition, signed by 350 Protestant inhabitants of the four lower baronies of the county Antrim, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders, in which they briefly stated, that they would find themselves happy that Roman Catholics would receive every immunity consistent with the spirit of the Constitution, and the interest of the Protestant religion.

Meanwhile the *United Irishmen* were particularly busied in establishing their system. Active emissaries from Belfast were despatched about the country for the purpose of forming new societies, who appear to have been everywhere successful; and on the 18th of April, it was announced in the *Northern Star*, that at a meeting of the Six-mile-water society of *United Irishmen*, "clergymen of different persuasions became members." As these societies gained strength, men of forward dispositions were everywhere seen to take an imperious lead, and to give early proofs that, if their schemes succeeded, every thing deemed valuable in society would give way to numbers and ignorance. Many of those thus engaged were men of desperate fortunes, while others were decoyed into the society by the specious pretext of the golden age that was to succeed a reform of the House of Commons, which was anxiously desired, being considered a certain remedy for every real or imaginary grievance. For, as it has been truly observed, the test was so plausible, "and its expressed objects so constitutional and legitimate, that we cannot wonder that it should be taken with avidity by numbers of all classes, especially, when recommended by men of talent," or who had some influence in the country.

From the period of the celebration of the French Revolution in Belfast, great exertions were made by the leaders of the *United Irishmen* for the revival of the armed volunteer associations, for the purpose of giving a warlike impulse to revolutionary measures, and overawing the parliament and

[r] About half past five o'clock, on the night of the 27th of February, 1792, the Irish House of Commons was discovered to be on fire, and the members had scarcely made their way out, when the roof fell in. In the same year, on the 9th of May, the British House of Commons was observed to be on fire, but it was extinguished without having done much damage. Both houses were generally believed to have been maliciously set on fire.—*Parliamentary Debates.*

the executive government, and dictating to both. One of the first steps of these new levies was to ingratiate themselves with the Roman Catholics, who had formerly been excluded from their ranks, and who had hence been led to regard volunteers rather as so many enemies than friends. In this career of liberality, the Broughshane volunteers, Captain William Duffin, led the way, by attending mass at Glenravel, where they "made a solemn declaration of their principles, and good intentions towards their Catholic brethren," and were hospitably entertained by "the friar" and his hearers. [s] Soon after money began to be collected throughout the country for the purpose of assisting the French in a war with which they were threatened by the emperor of Germany and king of Prussia, and in July these sums were forwarded to the president of the *French National Assembly*. The following sums were noticed in the Belfast newspapers as being sent:—Coleraine and Newtonlimavady, £600, Armagh city, 2,750 livres, Newry, £300, second society of *United Irishmen*, Belfast, £——, not known.

By the beginning of July, the numbers and discipline of the volunteers of the counties of Down and Antrim were deemed so respectable, that a review of those bodies was appointed to be held on the 14th of the above month, on the *Plains*, near Belfast. The Earl of Charlemont, who had usually acted as reviewing-general on similar occasions, was not invited to attend, as he was known to be inimical to some of the measures about to be brought forward. John Crawford, of Crawford's-burn, Esq., a major in the volunteer army, was appointed to act in his room.

Though great efforts were made to have a numerous muster, only thirteen volunteer corps were upon the field, six of which were from the county of Down, [t] and the others from that of Antrim, amounting in all to only 790 men, 194 of whom belonged to the two Belfast companies. It had been given out that the Constitution regiment, Colonel Forde, and the Union regiment, Colonel Wm. Sharman, were to have attended, but they did not come.

[s] Northern Star, April 28th, 1792.

[t] These were the companies of Moira, Dromore, Villa, Ballinahinch, Downpatrick, and Dromore light infantry. Mr. Tone in his Life, Vol. I., p. 157, says the Down corps were little better than so many *peep-o'-day-boys*.

The review passed over without anything remarkable as a volunteer spectacle, and on the return of the several corps into the town they were drawn up and *feu-de-joies* fired in honour of the day, but the great *fete* was reserved for a grand military and civil procession. On a triumphal car, drawn by four horses, richly caparisoned, was elevated the great standard, supported by two volunteers, on which was painted the releasement of the prisoners from the Bastile,—motto, "*Sacred to Liberty.*" The reverse exhibited the figure of *Hibernia*, one hand and foot in shackles, and a volunteer presenting to her a figure of Liberty—motto, "*for a people to be free, it is sufficient that they will it.*" On other flags were portraits of Dr. Ben. Franklin and Mirabeau.

The civil part of the procession was equally attractive. It moved in rear of the volunteers, and consisted of a considerable number of persons belonging to the town, and about 180 others from the adjoining parishes of Templepatrick and Carnmoney. Many of these wore green cockades, and green ribbons on their breasts, on which were imprinted, in silver letters—"*Fourth year, era of liberty.*" These also carried a green flag, on which was the motto,—"*Our Gallic brother was born July 14th, 1789; alas! we are still in embryo.*" Reverse—"*Superstitious jealousy the cause of the Irish Bastile, let us unite and destroy it.*" There were also five other flags carried in the procession, entitled those of the five free nations, viz.—France, Poland, America, Great Britain, and Ireland;—on that of the latter was—"*Unite and be free.*"

Having walked through the principal streets, the whole body, amounting to nearly 5000 persons, entered the square of the White-Linen-Hall, where, after several speeches had been delivered in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation, an address was voted to the *National Assembly of France*, and another to the people of Ireland, in behalf of the Roman Catholic claims, and reform. Three Presbyterian ministers, of the Synod of Ulster, took an active part in the proceedings, viz.:—William S. Dickson, Portaferry; Thomas L. Birch, Saintfield; and Sinclair Kelburne, third congregation, Belfast.

In the evening 104 gentlemen, who had taken an interest in the affairs of the day, dined together at the Donegal Arms.

Among these were Theobald W. Tone, John Keogh, Theobald M'Kenna, James N. Tandy, Dr. Callwell, Magherafelt; W. Stokes, jun., a fellow of Trinity College, Dublin; and several other noted political characters [u] of the French revolutionary school. At dinner, many political toasts were drunk, and several songs, written expressly for the occasion, were sung—one by Mr. Thomas Stott, of Dromore, beginning with, "While tyranny marshalls her minions around," was greatly applauded. The anniversary of the French Revolution was likewise celebrated in the towns of Ballymoney, Randalstown, and Newtonlimavady. Addresses were also voted, in the two former towns, to the *French National Assembly*.

To this meeting the Roman Catholic committee of Dublin sent down a deputation of fourteen persons, "of whom one was a priest;" [v] and Mr. Tone, in his journal, gives a glowing account of their reception. The dinner parties in honour of these gentlemen were numerous and sumptuous, and on one of these occasions, "Mr. M'Teir in the chair, chequered at the head of the table sat a Dissenter and Roman Catholic." The room was decorated with "the four flags of America, France, Poland, and Ireland, but no England;" [w] for though it had been deemed prudent that the latter should be borne in the late procession through the streets, it was deemed proper to discard it at the orgies of these patriotic citizens!

On the 18th July, the Dublin delegates set out in two divisions on their way homeward. Mr. Tone, accompanied by Samuel Neilson, and Alexander Lowry, of Linen-hill, went by Rathfriland, where a meeting was held with some of the neighbouring gentlemen regarding the best means of allaying the warfare kept up between the *peep-o'-day-boys*, and the *defenders*. After some consultation the meeting separated on good terms, but without their having effected an amicable arrangement. [x] Colonel James N. Tandy, and suit, proceeded by the way of Lurgan, in which town he was waited upon by the

[u] Northern Star, July, 1792; Belfast News-Letter, same date.

[v] Sir Richard Musgrave's History of the Rebellion of 1798.

[w] Life of Theobald W. Tone, Vol. I., p. 161-2.

[x] In the following month we find Mr. Tone, John Keogh, and Samuel Neilson perambulating the county Down on a similar mission.—*Life of Theobald W. Tone*, vol. I., p. 163.

populace "with military music, decorated with green cockades, breast ribbons," &c., who offered to chair him, which he declined. Afterwards, however, the populace took the horses from his carriage and drew him out of the town "in a style of enthusiastic triumph unexamplified," to the distance of half a mile, "amidst the plaudits of the greatest assemblage of the inhabitants which, on any occasion, hath been known to collect together." [y]

The *fetes* and pageantries connected with this review, having passed off highly to the satisfaction of the multitude, and also of those by whom its movements were arranged, immediately after numerous new corps of volunteers were arrayed for the avowed purpose of improving the Constitution. These bodies, generally, adopted a green or blue uniform, [z] and seemed to vie with each other in their assumption of French names and phrases. Hence several companies were distinguished by the names of "National Guards," the members of which addressed each other by the French foppery terms of "Citizen Soldier." Many corps had attached to their other names, that of "Independent," and some, by the way of still greater distinction, "Real Independents," or "Patriotic" and "Independent." A few took the name of "Intrepids," and others "Invincibles;" even the sorry village of Maghera, county of Derry, boasted of its corps of "National Guards," and that of Castledawson of its "Sons of Liberty and Loyalty." [a]

The country now resounded with the sound of the spirit-stirring drum, and the ear-piercing fife. Several corps were already provided with cannon, and some gentlemen contributed liberally to purchase the like for others, while companies, less fortunate in wealthy patrons, entered into subscriptions to provide cannon for themselves. The *Northern Star*, in noticing these subscriptions, hopes that they will be patronized "by the friends of liberty and of Ireland." In the same paper the public were informed, that a plan was in agitation for procur-

[y] Northern Star.

[z] The *Dublin Morning Post* of November 27th, says: "So great is the demand for green cloth, to array the 'National Guards' of Ireland, that the cloth merchants cannot answer it. Orders to the amount of 14,000 yards have been given; as much more has been purchased."

[a] Northern Star, December 26th, 1792.

ing the best firelocks, on the newest construction, to be given out to the "National Guards" at first cost.

During autumn, reviews were held of such volunteer corps as, from their distance, or not having been then embodied, had been unable to attend the review at Belfast. On the 1st of August, a review was to have taken place on Broughshane moor, but on the corps coming to the ground, a dispute arose between the Braid and Broughshane companies as to their seniority, and which should take the right in the line; and each appearing determined not to yield this point, the review was adjourned *sine die*. September 11th, a review of ten corps took place at Tobernamein, near Kells, Captain Edward Brice, of the Carrickfergus True Blues, acting reviewing-general. On the 19th of the same month, eighteen companies were reviewed at Dromore, by Colonel William Sharman, and on the 19th of October, twenty-seven corps, amounting to 1169 men, by Earl Annesley, near Rathfriland. December 26th, a volunteer review was also held at Drumbo, which presented the singular spectacle of the Rev. William Stavely, Covenanting minister, and captain of the Drumbracken volunteers, acting reviewing-general![b]

In the latter end of October, some alarm was excited in Belfast, by seditious papers circulated among the soldiers of the garrison; and about the same time bonfires, illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy, took place in almost every town and village of the county Antrim, and in several places of the adjoining counties, in consequence of the combined Austrian and Prussian armies being expelled from France. They had some weeks before invaded that country for the purpose of interfering in its internal government, and hence their disastrous retreat was hailed as the triumph of liberty over despotism; while the late dethroning of the king, and the savage massacres in Paris, were equally regarded as the glorious ebulitions of freedom, and the subject of general congratulation. Volunteer corps greeted the expulsion of the combined armies with *feu-de-joies*, and the town of Belfast, with the exception of a few houses, was brilliantly illuminated, and transparencies and mottos displayed, exhibiting clearly the prevailing bias of the

[b] Northern Star.

inhabitants. One of the former was a gallows suspending an inverted crown, and of the latter the following were among the most conspicious: "Vive la republique;" "Vive la nation;" "Rights of man;" "Irishmen look at France;" "Liberty and equality;" "France is free, so may we—let us will it;" "May the fate of every tyrant be that of Caput." Days of thanksgiving were likewise held in several Presbyterian congregations, for the success of the French arms—among these were those of Saintfield, Magherafelt, and Maghera. Political discourses were delivered on those occasions, which were called volunteer sermons, and their preachers were often entitled chaplains.[c] The attendance was always numerous.

Though dispositions for revolution were continued, and the commencement eagerly anticipated, the cry of Roman Catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform was kept up to save appearances, till the clamour may be said to have reached that stage, so facetiously described by the poet:—

"No sow-gelder could blow his horn,
To geld a cat, but cried—reform."

A train of untoward circumstances had increased the numbers and confidence of the disaffected even beyond the expectation of their leaders. Royalty had been abolished in France, and a republic established in its room, while their armies were everywhere triumphant; and on the 19th of November the French government passed their famous decree of fraternity. By this decree assistance was offered to every nation, who, as it was expressed, were desirous to recover their freedom; or, more properly, to extend universally the new principles of government adopted in France. The generals, at the head of

[c] The following notices regarding these sermons are copied from the same paper:—"According to previous notice, sanctioned by the hearty concurrence of the whole worshipping society (a few individuals excepted, on whom the breath of aristocracy had shed its baneful influence), the Presbyterian congregation of Maghera, assembled at their meeting-house, with our stated pastor, the Rev. John Glendy, exhibited, on this great occasion, distinguished abilities, in a manly, disinterested, and public-spirited manner, having displayed, with peculiar energy, the signal interposition of heaven, on behalf of the French nation. James Graham, session-clerk, December 5th, 1792."

"Dunagore volunteers, on parade, Sunday, February 3rd, 1793—Resolved unanimously, That the warmest thanks of this company be given to the Rev. John Wright, for his excellent sermon delivered to us this day, wherein the nature of civil liberty and civil government were explained in such a manner as merited our entire approbation. Benjamin Adair, Lieutenant."—*Northern Star.*

their armies, were empowered to protect such foreigners, as had or might suffer in the cause of liberty; or, in other words, that they would assist in promoting rebellion in every nation in Europe. A few days after, a deputation of English, Scotch, and Irish, appeared at the bar of the National Convention, and felicitated them on the triumph of liberty. [d]

In Belfast no time appears to have been lost on the receipt of this joyous intelligence, as on the 30th of the same month the president of the French National Convention read a letter from the "society of the friends of liberty and equality," in Belfast, which was also accompanied by an address from the same society. [e] The contents of these papers have not transpired, but from the temper of the leading politicians of that town, at this period, it is highly probable these greetings were for the purpose of claiming their assistance in virtue of the above decree; and this appears, in some measure, confirmed by the following correspondence with Mr. Tone. Robert Simms, Belfast, when writing to that gentleman in Dublin, thus describes the progress of political affairs in his neighbourhood:—"We are going on here with boots of seven leagues, and will soon be at liberty and equality," literally signifying, according to the political vocabulary of that day, that in a short time we would be as far forward as the French. That this was his true meaning is confirmed by the letter of his colleague, Samuel Neilson, to the same, dated from Belfast on the 28th November, wherein he says:—"You can have no conception of the progress of union here; and I do assure you we are farther forward than ever I expected in a twelvemonth. The universal question throughout the country is—When do we begin? Do we refuse hearth-money or tithes first?" [f] In his editorial lucubrations in the *Northern Star* of the same date, it is emphatically asked—"When does the revolution begin? When will it commence first? Such questions are in the mouth of every one." The import of this language cannot be mistaken; it comes at once to the purposed rebellion. The Jesuitical cant about reform and emancipation were no longer deemed

[d] Gentleman's Magazine, Supplement, p. 1211;—1792.

[e] Gentleman's Magazine, 1792, p. 1211.

[f] Life of Theobald W. Tone, vol. I. p. 221.

necessary; and it was proclaimed, in the same paper, "let us resort to a National Convention,"—a term truly invidious, from its obvious allusion to the turbulent government of France. The newspapers now teemed with declarations, resolutions, toasts, and details, of the progress of volunteer associations, and the several societies and clubs daily starting into notice. A few brief specimens of the language used by them are here given, and as straws thrown up are said to show how the wind blows, we begin with the sentiments toasted over their cups by the sturdy citizens of Doagh.

At a meeting, in November, of the society of United Irishmen of that village, William G. Owens, chairman, William Galt, secretary, the following toasts were drunk:—"The French republic." "May every United Irishman become a volunteer, and every volunteer a United Irishman." "May the world become a republic, and every inhabitant a citizen." In the resolutions of the Ballyclare independent volunteers, they said: "Resolved, that the immutable laws of reason and justice saith that man, by nature, is free, and that liberty is his property; and that he or they who may infringe on said property shall ere long be responsible to the majority of the people." The Lisburn volunteers, Captain Alexander Crawford, published no manifesto of their principles, but on the 2nd December they made a public display of their liberality by attending mass in that town. Among the interesting news of the day it was announced, in the *Northern Star*, that a man in the parish of Carnmoney, named Donaldson, and another, a member of the Carrickfergus True Blues, had their infant sons baptized Dumevrier—the name of a then popular French general. Of the latter infant, it was added, "The child must certainly, in time, be a 'patriotic soldier.'" The same newspaper, of the 5th December, thus points out—"What evils will be removed, and what advantages gained, by a reform in parliament." "1st, Tithes will be abolished, and every man will pay his own clergy. 2nd, Hearth-money, that abominable badge of slavery and oppression to the poor, will cease. 3rd, We will not hereafter be taxed to pay pensioners and policemen to vote against us; the consequence of this will be, that tobacco, for which we now pay 16d. per pound, will then be sold for 4d. per pound,

and every other article of imported goods in proportion. 4th, We will have no excise laws; the merchant and shopkeeper will get leave to carry on their business quietly, without the intrusion of plundering revenue officers. 5th, The expenses and tediousness of the law will give way to prompt and equal justice, *gratis*. Irishmen! are these objects of any importance; unite then—associate—resolve—*and carry your resolves into execution.*" In the same newspaper of the 8th, the subject is continued; and the public were told, that on a reform taking place, "church cesses would be no more," and "customs at fairs would be abolished." The Press would be unshackled, "for a newspaper which now costs twopence, would be then sold for one halfpenny; and the present ridiculous idea of obligation to landlords be done away." By such idle tales, false hopes were raised in the minds of the multitude, who were thus led from discontent to rebellion.

In the same month, a club was established in Belfast, entitled the "Irish Jacobins," in imitation of the Jacobin club of Paris, so fatally signalized as the inciters of the numerous massacres which disgraced that capital, and whose leading members were Marat, Danton, and Robespierre.[g] Strange, however, as it may now appear, the savage deeds of these monsters were applauded by our Belfast Jacobins, and in the *Northern Star*, the French club were called the *saviours* of their country! The declaration and resolutions of our Irish Jacobins—signed, Rowley Osburne, chairman; Samuel Kennedy, secretary, were equally violent and declamatory as those of their Parisian brethren. They proceeded to proclaim

[g] The club of the Jacobins was one of the most violent of the numerous clubs then in Paris, and of this triumvirate it has been said: "Danton murdered to glut his rage—Robespierre to avenge his injured vanity, or to remove a rival whom he hated—Marat from the same instinctive love of blood which induces a wolf to continue his ravages of the flocks long after his hunger is appeased, and his political exhortations, in a journal of which he was editor, began and ended like the howl of a blood-hound." Robespierre has been described as one in whose presence "virtue was a crime and genius a foundation for suspicion," yet possessing little talent, saving a deep fund of hypocrisy. His speeches, whether in the National Convention or Jacobin club, were lauded in the *Northern Star*, and were also sometimes published in pamphlets at the office of that paper. It was hence supposed, that on his being guillotined, an elegy would have appeared in the *Northern Star* recording his virtues and lamenting his loss. None, however, was published, the editor conforming at once to the new order of things in France—calmly remarking, that his "removal from power had become indispensable."—*Northern Star*, December, 1792.

that their country had no "national government," and the people were advised to turn their thoughts to a "National Convention," in order to collect the public opinion on the subject of reform. They declared their wishes to extend the elective franchise to all citizens; and that when the mode of government was "not derived from all the people clearly expressed, that nation has no Constitution." They also announced their determination to form an association for the purpose of disseminating their principles, and, individually and collectively, to exert every means in their power to carry the same into execution, in order that the country might be "liberated from the shackles of tyranny." [h] At the same time the public are informed by the newspapers, that the Belfast volunteer company, blue, had agreed to adopt a cheap uniform, in order to facilitate the admission of new members at "this serious crisis."

The "National Guards" of Maghera, county of Derry, were equally explicit regarding their conduct, and the improvement of the Constitution, as their Jacobin brethren. They proceeded to announce "to the world their political principles, in order," as they declared, "to confound envy, silence the babblings of jealousy, *illumine ignorance*, and *inspire public confidence*." They went on, with all the ability which the preamble promises, to declare several laudable feelings and propensities of theirs; and the moment when public resistance is public virtue, which was pretty significantly told, as not far off, and that they were not to be deterred from their duty, "until the country should *taste* the sweets of *freedom*, and *pluck the fruit luxuriant from the tree of liberty*." [i]

In the resolutions of the Newtownards volunteers, they said: "We solemnly promise and engage not to lay down our arms but with our lives, until we have accomplished the full redress of our greivances." The Larne corps, who appear to have been equally a chivalrous body, declared that they would protect their fellow-citizens and themselves from every "species of oppression, whether it proceed from a mob or a monarch,

[h] About the same time a similar club was established in Dublin.

[i] Northern Star.

a riot or a proclamation;" and the Belfast light dragoons published, that they would continue embodied until they should obtain the object of their wishes, and afterwards "continue in arms to defend them." This puissant troop amounted to exactly *seventeen persons!*

Up to this period, masonic lodges were said to have kept free from political discussions, but many of these now launched out into republican declamation, with the fury of so many Jacobin clubs. At a meeting of Lodge No. 730, at Garvagh, they went on to say: "We detest any man, or body of men, who sway from their country's cause, under a cloak of allegiance, or any other motive whatsoever." Again—"Resolved, That factitious titles, such as monarchy, royalty, serenity, excellency, &c., are ponderous and oppressive mountains in the great globe of despotism, under which poor Erin sinks and groans." A word in your ear: "Whereabouts is France at a loss for the want of either." Lodge No. 539, the Worshipful Abraham Elliot, in the chair. "Resolved—That, as masons and as men, unbiassed by the subtle insinuations of government pimps and their retainers, we profess our steady and loyal attachment to his present Majesty King George the Third, and shall always do so, while there are no attempt on his part to extend the executive power beyond the limits of the Constitution." On a meeting of delegates from ten lodges, at Lisburn, they commence their manifesto by declaring themselves, "*Political, but not voluntary, slaves.*" At Dungannon, delegates from thirty lodges assembled, the Worshipful James Reynolds, M.D., Corkstown, in the chair. By them the brethren were recommended to "be peaceable, but powerful;" and it was said in their declaration: "Let every lodge in the land become a company of citizen-soldiers—let every volunteer company become a lodge of masons." The resolutions of the lodges of Tubermore, Castledawson, Comber, Randalstown, and many others, were nearly similar. [j] In some lodges the oath of allegiance, which it had been usual to administer on the admission of a brother, was discontinued.

While the volunteers of the north continued to advance with "boots of seven leagues," in Dublin their affairs had

[j] Northern Star.

taken an unfavourable turn. The first battalion of "National Guards" of that city had been summoned by their secretary, Captain Mathew Dowling, to assemble in Ship-street, on the 9th December, to celebrate the success of the French arms, and the triumph of universal liberty. Their summon commenced with the popular French phrase of citizen-soldier, and was dated, "the last year of slavery;" but on the morning of the 8th, a proclamation was issued by the Lord Lieutenant and Council, forbidding the assembling of armed bodies in the city or vicinity of Dublin. Hence no armed assemblage took place in that city on the 9th, and the only volunteers who appeared in uniform in Ship-street, were James N. Tandy, Archibald H. Rowan, and William P. Carey. The dress of this regiment was copied from that of the French National Guards. Their coat was green, turned up with white; white waistcoat, striped trousers, gilt buttons, impresssed with a harp and no crown, but a device over the harp of a cap of liberty upon a pike—emblems truly significant of the intentions of their wearers!

However, the leaders of the volunteers in Dublin, as if to make trial how far the Irish government would suffer themselves to be insulted with impunity, on the 14th of the said month, they issued a counter-proclamation, signed William Drennan, chairman, Archibald H. Rowan, secretary. In this document the citizen-soldiers were conjured by their interest, their duty, and their glory, to stand to their arms! This earnest appeal, nevertheless, failed of producing the desired effect—and for its dispersion the secretary was afterwards tried and found guilty of a seditious libel on the government and constitution of the kingdom, and sentenced to be two years imprisoned in Newgate, and to pay a fine of £500.[k] The

[k] On the trial of Mr. Rowan, the attorney general (Wolfe) thus noticed the extinction of the Dublin "National Guards:" "The 1st battalion of "National Guards" were to have paraded, clothed like Frenchmen. The night before, the Lord Lieutenant had summoned the council of the kingdom; upon that night a proclamation was issued, stating, that there were intentions to assemble men in arms, with seditious signs, and apprehending danger from this assembling, it prohibited their meeting." "Appalled by this proclamation, the corps did not meet as it was intended, though some few were seen dressed in the 'National Guards' uniform, parading the streets, with a mob crowding at their heels; but, however, nothing followed. They were seen, and blessed be God, they were seen no more."—*Parliamentary debates; trial of Archibald H. Rowan; Northern Star.*

chairman was afterwards tried for the part taken in the same address, but acquitted.

These ominous movements against the "National Guards" of the capital, excited a serious sensation among the citizen-soldiers of the north, who probably anticipated that a similar proclamation might one day be directed against themselves. In Belfast the volunteers affected to be highly indignant that their loyalty should be suspected, and at a meeting of one of the corps of that town, on the 17th December, they agreed upon an address to the volunteers of Ireland. In this address they proceeded to comment upon the proclamation of the 8th, and the right of the people to carry arms. After some sentimental observations about philanthrophy, renovation of the Constitution, emancipation, reform, and their preservation of the public peace, they said: "If bad advisers, or weak and wicked men, shall force the people into extremity, *on them* let all the miseries fall of civil convulsion." On the following day a meeting took place of the Belfast first volunteer company, which also agreed upon an address to the volunteers of this kingdom. This they commenced, in capitals, with the astounding intelligence of, "Fellow-soldiers, your country is in danger." They proceeded to condemn the proclamation that had been issued against the assembling of the "National Guards" in Dublin, and complained that the public grievances were almost innumerable and intolerable. Their "fellow-soldiers, were called upon to be firm," to persevere, to unite, to increase their numbers, and to improve their discipline, with the consoling assurance, that if they did, their "country must be saved." [1]

On the 25th of December, a numerous meeting of the inhabitants of Belfast was held in the meeting-house of the second Dissenting congregation, Charles Rankin, Esq., in the chair, Mr. Samuel Neilson, secretary, for the purpose "of expressing their sentiments on the present state of public affairs, and to enter into such measures as might be deemed expedient for the accomplishing that great object—an equal representation of the people in parliament." The business of the day was opened by Mr. Robert Thompson, who, in the course of

[1] Northern Star.

his speech, said, that he "had preferred our government to any other, with an improved representation, but without it any other was as good." He was followed in much the same strain by William Sinclair and Robert Getty, Esqrs. Mr. J. Monford recommended "the steady and able men of the country" to come forward and enrol themselves among their armed brethren, and those who were in an advanced state of life to contribute to the cause in a pecuniary way, and he hoped, by the poor coming forward at this crisis, much good might be done by the contributions of the rich. The Rev. Sinclair Kelburne said, "he did not prefer our much-boasted Constitution—he did not know whether there was really any such thing; he had heard of a government of king, lords, and commons, but he could never approve of hereditary legislators;" yet he concurred in the present declaration, and preferred a reformed parliament rather than have recourse to violence, though he might esteem another government more perfect. In the resolutions entered into upon this occasion, it was said: "Our warmest thanks are justly due to the volunteers of Ireland. Soldiers of liberty, we thank you! Be *firm*, increase your numbers, perfect your discipline." It was also agreed that those who were in an advanced state of life should contribute to the purchase of "arms, ammunition, and accoutrements" for the "National Guards," and a committee of twenty-four persons was appointed to receive the several patriotic subscriptions. [m]

Throughout the north the arming and array of the volunteers were continued with unabated activity. In a few places a levy, *en masse*, was even contemplated, of which we have the following specimen, in an extract of a letter from Saintfield, as published in the *Belfast News-Letter*, dated on Christmas day:—"The Presbyterian congregation met this day, and entered into resolutions upon the present state of affairs. It was proposed at the meeting, and unanimously applauded, that the congregation, for the defence of their families and properties, shall immediately proceed to acquire the military exercise, whereby, with those already in arms, upwards of 500 brave fellows will be added to the 'National Guards' of Ireland."

[m] Belfast Politics, p. 107, 114.

In Belfast, several corps of volunteers, lately arrayed, were formed into one body, and took the title of the "First Belfast regiment of National Guards." On Sunday, the 3rd of February, 1793, they first paraded in uniform, and attended divine service at the meeting-house of the second Dissenting congregation in that town. Their number amounted to about 360, and were divided into four companies. Their coat was green, faced with yellow, green waistcoat, white breeches, long black gaiters, and leather cap. [n] At the same time the other Belfast companies were united into one regiment and took the name of the "Belfast battalion, Blue," Charles Rankin, Esq., colonel. On these arrangements, the latter regiment appointed a recruiting committee of twenty-four persons, and a few days after the following advertisement appeared in the newspapers:—"Recruits are requested to attend drill at the market-house, on the mornings and evenings of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, at eight o'clock." It was also announced that two additional drummers and fifers were wanted for each of these regiments.

The general movements of the disaffected now tended to indicate that their plans fast approached completion. [o] In Belfast, efforts continued to be made for the seduction of the soldiery from their allegiance, for which three inhabitants were arrested, and a printer of seditious hand-bills, that had been distributed among the military in garrison, kept out of the way. In the *Northern Star* it was said, "We feel gratified in announcing to the volunteer army of Ulster that a committee of the Belfast regiment of volunteers have in preparation a new and simple system of military exercise which is nearly identical with that at present practised by the army." On the 12th of January, it was stated, in the same paper, that the "Carrick-

[n] The following gentlemen are noticed by Mr. Tone as being captains in this regiment:—Thomas M'Cabe, Henry Haslett, James Hyndman. Francis M'Cracken was captain-lieutenant.—*Belfast News-Letter.*

[o] In January, 1793, the writer was in the house of a first lieutenant of a country corps of volunteers, who had just returned from evening parade, and was relating to some friends that Mr. H———, who, a few evenings before, had been chosen second lieutenant, had declined that honour, choosing rather to continue as a private. He proceeded to comment on the strange simplicity of Mr. H———, observing, that in a few weeks they would be under pay, "And sure," continued he, "you all know the great difference there is between the pay of an officer and that of a private." His hearers nodded assent.

fergus True Blues" were mounting their cannon, and "enlisting men to work them," while, at the same time, a reward was offered in the newspapers for the discovery of the persons who, two nights before, had feloniously carried off fifty-six stand of small arms from a house adjoining the castle gate, Carrickfergus, where they had been lodged for safety. In several districts of Down and Louth, the "Defenders," though equally busied in warlike preparations, and equally hostile to the government, continued to regard the *United Irishmen* merely as a separate faction; and it is equally certain that comparatively few Roman Catholics had joined the volunteers, though their ranks were now commonly open to them. It indeed appears that, with a few exceptions throughout the north, the Catholic body continued unfriendly towards the volunteers, from whose ranks they had formerly been excluded, [p] which feeling is amply illustrated by the following fact. On the 18th of January, a carman coming from Dublin, with arms for the Buckna volunteers, Captain John Gordon, was robbed of his charge, near Jonesborough, by a body of "Defenders," though he kept lustily calling out that they belonged to their Protestant brethren, who had lately attended mass at Glenravel!

About this time a company of artillery, with several field-pieces and ammunition waggons, arrived from Dublin in Belfast; and six informations were filed, in the court of King's Bench, against the proprietors of the *Northern Star* for the publication, in their paper, of the like number of libellous and seditious articles. The proprietors were obliged to repair to Dublin to enter into a recognizance, and were accompanied, in that city, by a retinue of Roman Catholic gentlemen; and to demonstrate the general union that prevailed, each bail-bond was jointly executed by a Protestant and Roman Catholic. In the same month (January), the houses and stores of several persons in Belfast were searched by the officers of customs for smuggled fire-arms, but none were found. [q]

On the 2nd of February, a circular letter was issued by the Belfast volunteer committee, for a meeting of delegates from

[p] Since writing the above, we have heard, on respectable authority, that there were several new corps in the county of Down, who were wholly Roman Catholics.

[q] Northern Star.

the corps of the county of Antrim, to assemble in the town of Antrim on the 11th, for the purpose of taking into consideration the state of their affairs. No account of their proceedings were then published, but the omission is fortunately supplied by the following extract of a letter from Robert Simms, merchant, Belfast, to his friend Theobald W. Tone, dated the day after. "Yesterday, assembled at Antrim, delegates from thirty-five volunteer companies of this county, representing about 2000 men, and unanimously agreed: 1st, To associate all the volunteers of the county into one body, and recommended similar associations to the volunteers throughout the kingdom, preparatory to a union of the whole. 2nd, To appoint a committee, for one year, who are to have the sole direction of the volunteers of the county, and to fix a mode of exercise, reviews, and appoint generals, fix the quantity of ammunition, accoutrements, and stores necessary for each corps. There are sixty in the county, amounting to about 3100 men, and will be 5000 before Christmas. We are taking the effectual steps to provide the necessary articles and stores for volunteers." [r] The progress of these armings would seem to have been seriously watched by the government, as, about this time, an act was passed by the Irish parliament to "prevent the importation of arms, gunpowder, and ammunition into the kingdom, and the removing and keeping of gunpowder, cannons, fire-arms, &c., without license, under a heavy penalty, that those who entertained rebellious designs, should be debarred from obtaining supplies." This prevention would appear to have become necessary, as, on the 11th of February, it was stated by the Earl of Farnham, in the House of Lords, that a large quantity of gunpowder had been seized on its way to the north. [s]

For some time previous, the growing agitation had been heightened in consequence of the election of parochials, and other delegates, preparatory to a Provincial Convention, about to be held at Dungannon, for the purpose, as was expressed, of taking into consideration the state of the kingdom, and declaring "the sense of the people" in their several districts. On the 15th of February, the delegates met, at least some of whom

[r] Life of Theobald W. Tone, vol. I., p. 268.

[s] Parliamentary Debates.

attended, "rather in the hope of preventing ill than in the achieving much good." [t] Their resolutions were prefaced by a short declaration, "that they were cordially attached to the original principles of the British Constitution; regretted the probability of a war with France; urged the necessity of a reform in Parliament, and Roman Catholic emancipation; declared their hostility to a national militia, and proclaimed their obligation to the volunteers, who were exhorted to increase their numbers, and improve their discipline." A committee of thirty persons was appointed, with the power of re-convoking the assembly, and to communicate with the other provinces, to concert measures for calling together a National Convention, should circumstances render the like necessary. The members of this committee, for the county Antrim, were —Thomas M. Jones, James A. Farrel, Alexander M'Manus, Wm. Sinclair, Hugh Boyd; county of Down—Gawan Hamilton, Alexander Stewart, Joseph Pollock, John Crawford, Wm. S. Dickson; from county of Derry—J. Church, Hugh Lyle, Alexander Knox, James Scott, James Achison; county of the town of Carrickfergus—Wm. Finlay. The Rev. Wm. S. Dickson preached before this meeting. His text was Joseph's advice to his brethren: "See that you fall not out by the way."

It is equally strange as true, that this meeting originated with a number of gentlemen who were really reformers, and who hoped, by their influence and exertions, to turn the channel of revolutionary principles by a declaration in favour of the government, with the improvement of a reform in the national representation. [u] However laudable the motives of these projectors may have been, they appear to have been strangers to the schemes and influence of the *United Irishmen*, though, for months previous, enough had appeared in the newspapers to disclose their real intentions. It is hence certain that this meeting failed of producing any useful effect, while their opposition to the measures of the government, and encomiums on the volunteers, were gratifying to many; and it was boasted in the *Northern Star*, that "the whole province is one great society of *United Irishmen*."

[t] A Letter to the inhabitants of the Lordship of Newry.

[u] MS. written by a delegate to this meeting.

In the interim, notwithstanding the prohibitory order of the government against the assembling of armed bodies in the city or vicinity of Dublin, efforts were made to keep up volunteer parades. On Sunday, the 28th of January, part of the Goldsmiths' corps assembled in Ship-street, under the orders of Thomas Bacon, a taylor, but who, from his volunteer rank, was commonly called Major Bacon. They soon dispersed, on their being waited upon for that purpose by Alderman Warren. However, on the 24th of February, the "Dublin Rangers," under the orders of Major Askenhurst, a public notary, also paraded in Ship-street, where Alderman James desired them to disperse, which they refused to do. On their refusal, he hastened to the castle-guard for assistance, but before the arrival of the guard, the volunteers were on their way to Drumcondra, in which direction they were followed by the soldiers. The former taking cover in a house, the guard passed on, and the volunteers, in dropping parties, returned to the city, and did not again appear in arms. A few days afterwards, Alderman James seized four pieces of cannon belonging to the "Liberty Rangers." On the 2nd of March, the Lawyers' corps made a voluntary surrender of their cannon to the government, and on the 7th of the same month, some pike-heads were seized by him in Suffolk-street. [r]

Though the volunteers throughout the north continued busied in strengthening their ranks, and their parades were kept up, yet from the state of volunteer affairs in Dublin, serious apprehensions were entertained that the days of their appearance were numbered. Their cannon and stores were, therefore, secreted, and on the 2nd of March, the following appeared in the *Northern Star*:—"*Caution: volunteers* who have *cannon*, would do well to take the *hint* from the Dublin affair, and *dispose of them* as soon as possible, lest they loose them, and incur a penalty of £500." Two days after, the stores of several merchants in Belfast were searched, under the gunpowder act, for cannon and ammunition, but none were found. On the same day, search was made in Lisburn, under the direction of a magistrate, for the cannon of the volunteers of that town, but only their carriages were discovered. March 6th, this ad-

[r] The Dublin newspapers.

ditional "caution" was published in the same paper: "At the present alarming period, we would earnestly recommend it to the people to behave with manly coolness, and not to suffer themselves, through indignation of the proceedings of the capital, to be hurried into any act of outrage, or resistance to the laws. By this line of conduct they will evince that they are capable and worthy of enjoying rational liberty, and that they know the difference between the demands of a nation and the resistance of a part. Soon will Ireland speak her cause of her present state, and the measures above alluded to accelerate the period. Until then, let the people rest quietly on their arms, and give no handle to their enemies wherewith to vilify them."

In this state of things, little appears to have been wanting on the part of the disaffected, but a pretext to "Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war," when an event took place, which was, for a time, believed would have proved the harbinger of revolution. On the evening of Saturday, the 9th of March, a blind fiddler, playing in North-street, Belfast, was desired by some of the 17th dragoons present, to play "God save the King," but a crowd of persons present declared that he should not play it. Some expressions were also used against his majesty, and those who would take his part, and at the same time a stone was thrown at the dragoons. [w] A conflict immediately ensued between the parties, and the dragoons being joined by some of their comrades, the crowd was compelled to retreat, and the victors proceeded to hack, with their swords, the signs of General Dumuvrier, Washington, M. Mirabeau, and Dr. Ben. Franklin, that had lately been put up. During these riotous proceedings, the windows of several houses were also broken, and some persons passing, who are said to have been no way concerned in the riot, were wounded by the horsemen.

The riot was soon suppressed by the presence of some military officers, but as the affair was now looked upon as a timely pretext for the commencement of the revolution, it was determined that it should not be lost. Accordingly, during the night, about 450 volunteers, bearing their arms, assembled in the meeting-house of the third Dissenting congregation, while

[w] Belfast Politics, p. 128.

several of the "National Guards," in full uniform, were despatched about the country to solicit the assistance of their brethren in arms. Some of these who kept watch in the meeting-house appeared unwilling to wait for the expected aid. Among these was an officer, who, brandishing his sword, sallied into the street, calling upon those near him, to drive the despots from the town! He was borne off home by some of his men, who having made less free with the bottle, seemed less anxious to open the campaign!

The forenoon of the 10th was passed in deep suspense by those in the meeting-house, where a sermon was delivered to them by its revered pastor, Mr. Kelburne. We have been unable to learn the text or context of his discourse, but presume that it was calling his hearers forth to deeds of arms, as a loaded blunderbuss lay on the cushion before him during its delivery!

In the evening, the messengers from the country arrived and made their report. They were declared willing to lend their assistance, but unable to join in an immediate warfare, as the arms of the greater number were unserviceable, and many destitute of ammunition, circumstances, however unfortunate, yet were really true. In their absence a meeting of the inhabitants had been held, and a committee of twenty-two persons appointed, consisting of the sovereign, five magistrates, the high constable of the barony, and other gentlemen, to inquire into the cause of the riot. The committee were now waited upon by General White, commanding the northern district, who, three days before, had been sworn into the commission of the peace for the counties of Down and Antrim. He "was invited to attend as a member" of the commitee, which he declined, but desired an interview with them, to whom he expressed a wish that the volunteers would disperse, as he had ordered a sufficient force to preserve the peace. At the same time he ordered the dragoons off to other quarters;[x] and the volunteers being aware that no aid was to be expected from the country, retired to their homes. Samuel Neilson, one of the volunteers, thus notices these proceedings in a letter to Mr. Tone. The volunteers assembled to the number

[x] The Northern Star.

of 450 or 500; "this turned the scale, the military took the alarm, bowed, and begged pardon, and this day the whole regiment of horse was ordered to leave the town in fifteen minutes warning by General Whyte. We have forgiven the troop, and permitted the offenders to depart with the corps." Robert Simms, Belfast, when writing to the same, regarding this affair, says, "The soldiers not only destroyed M'Cabe's shop, but also the adjoining one belonging to Mr. Orr, a zealous volunteer, and a milliner's shop, who had trimmed the helmets of the volunteer light horse. They dispersed after several of them were taken prisoners. Fortunately for them they did so, for the volunteers began to assemble, and would have finished them," as, in a short time, the volunteers were 400 strong. "The mob also gathered in great force, and began to threaten vengeance. Had the riot continued, the neighbouring volunteers would have come to town." He goes on to say, that it was beyond a doubt the plan of the riot was laid in Hillsborough, and "that some of the officers were abettors and encouragers of it." [y]

Two days after this affair a proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and council, dated on the 11th of the same month, was received in Belfast, forbidding the assembling of armed bodies within that town, "and the several districts adjacent thereto." In this document it was stated, "That arms and gunpowder, to a very large amount—much above the common consumption—had been recently sent to Belfast and Newry," and that "bodies of men in arms" were drilled and exercised by day and night, and that the declared object of the said armed bodies was a redress of alleged grievances. In a letter of the same date from the chief secretary, Hobart, to the sovereign of that town, it was said: "And if any body shall again assemble in arms in Belfast and the neighbourhood, the magistrate will exert himself to prevent the same, for which purpose General White has directions to give every assistance in his power." From this period the volunteers of Belfast, and its immediate vicinity, ceased to parade. The *Northern Star*, when noticing this proclamation, merely said, "It is for the consideration of the volunteers of this town and district adjacent, whether it

[y] Life of Theobald W. Tone, Vol. I., p. 272.

would be wise or patriotic in them to risk the peace of the country, by appearing in bodies, with arms, unless to preserve the public peace, and to aid the civil power; is it not much more magnanimous to discontinue the use of arms for the *present?* The time may come, and that shortly, when all Ireland may be glad to see the *saviours* of their country once more in formidable array." A few days after the Newry company of volunteers, called the fusileers, Captain Moody, surrendered their cannon to persons appointed to receive them by the government. On the 15th of the same month, 225 rounds of canister shot, fitted for six pounder cannon, were found in a shallow part of the river Lagan, near Lisburn. They could not have been for the cannon of the Lisburn volunteers, which were only three pounders, but they may have been for those of Belfast, and as a search for the like had been made in that town, perhaps those who had them in charge took this way to dispose of them.

On the 19th of March, the "volunteer standing committee," of the county of Antrim, met in Ballymena, Adam Dickey, Esq., in the chair, Henry Haslett, secretary. In their declaration they said, "That the good of the country had been their only aim, and that they would stand or fall together in her defence. That obedience to the laws of the land had been the unalterable principles of Irish volunteers; that they had associated for constitutional purposes only," and it was to them Ireland was indebted for her present tranquility. They concluded by calling upon their brother volunteers, to join with them in vindicating their honest fame, which, they said, had hitherto been untainted by the breath of calumny.

At the spring assizes held at Dundalk, a bill of indictment was found against James N. Tandy, merchant in Dublin, for having published a printed hand-bill, entitled, "*Common Sense,*" said to contain seditious matter. He attended in court to take his trial, but learning that a charge was also to have been brought against him for the part that he had taken with a body of *defenders* at Castlebellingham, among whom he was reported to have distributed money, he deemed it prudent to withdraw, and soon after left the kingdom. Twelve of the

defenders were condemned at this assizes—two of whom suffered death on the same evening they were convicted. [z]

In the county of Antrim, Moses Dawson and Robert Orr, both of Belfast, were tried at the assizes on an indictment charging them with an attempt to alienate the allegiance of some soldiers of the 55th regiment, and acquitted. A bill of indictment was also found against Daniel Blow, printer, of the same town, for printing seditious libels, and uttering seditious words, but he did not appear. Joseph Cuthbert, tailor, Belfast, was tried at the same assizes, for delivering to James Rose, soldier in the 55th regiment, an extract from a pamphlet, published by Thomas Cooper, reflecting on the arbitrary nature of military service. The trial lasted from ten o'clock in the morning to eight at night, when he was found guilty, and sentenced to stand one hour in the pillory in Belfast, and to be imprisoned in the county jail for one year. These persons were volunteers, who, according to their repeated declarations, assembled for "Constitutional purposes."

Early in this summer, a confidential agent arrived in Dublin, from France, with a message directed "to the popular leaders in Ireland," and also for the purpose of his sounding and conversing with them. He had an interview with Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and offered to deposit, in any Bank in Europe, the pay of 40,000 men for six months, "they being informed that such was the number of the Irish volunteers," on the "condition that they would declare an absolute independence of England." This offer, however, was declined, and the emissary soon after retired without effecting his purpose. [a] For the leaders of the *United Irishmen* declining this offer no satisfactory cause has been assigned, but it is believed to have been the imperfect state of the volunteer associations. For though, in a popular harangue delivered some time before at the Rotunda in Dublin, the volunteers were rated at the above number, it is certain those really armed did not amount to one-half of those given out, and even these, with the excep-

[z] Anthologia Hibernica, vol. I., p. 240; Autobiography of Archibald H. Rowan, p. 188.

[a] M'Nevin's Pieces of Irish History; Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; Autobiography of Archibald H. Rowan, p. 161.

tion of a few corps in Dublin and Belfast, were nearly equally destitute of ammunition or serviceable fire-arms.

The growing spirit of disaffection throughout the kingdom was greatly heightened, about this period, by the arrangements going forward for establishing a "national militia." It was circulated that it was a scheme of the government to entrap the people into the regular army, and in several parts of the kingdom, serious riots took place, and in numerous instances, the like was only prevented by the presence of a military force. On the 28th of June, a meeting of the governor and deputy-governors of the county of Down, was held at the hamlet of Castlereagh, for the purpose of carrying the provisions of the militia act into effect. From some hints of disturbance that had been given, the governors were attended by a troop of the 17th dragoons, and though there was a vast body of people present, the business of the day passed quietly on. However, about the hour of two o'clock, the dragoons retired to some distance to water their horses, and no sooner were they out of sight, than a furious discharge of stones was made by the people on the house where the governors were met, its windows staved, the sentinel wounded, and his horse knocked down. Shots were now fired from the house, which being heard by the dragoons, they returned with all haste, and were met by a shower of stones, on which they charged, and drove the rioters from the road into the fields, where they kept mustering, as if meditating a fresh assault. An account of these proceedings was immediately forwarded to Belfast, and soon after the 38th regiment, and a detachment of artillery, with two pieces of cannon, arrived at Castlereagh, but before their arrival the people had dispersed. Six or seven persons from the country are said to have been killed on this occasion, and about the same number were reported to have been wounded. Throughout the adjoining counties, the people were equally hostile to the establishing of a militia, but no opposition was made. The *Northern Star*, of July 3rd, stated, that 743 inhabitants of the parish of Connor, William Walkingshaw, secretary, had presented a petition to the Right Hon. John O'Neill, requesting him to resign the command of the Antrim militia, and to discourage others from taking any part in that hateful measure.

From the Convention at Dungannon, it was openly circulated, that a grand "National Convention" was about to be held at Athlone, and 1st September was, according to report, at length pointed out as the day for the meeting of that august assembly. In the interim, however, the Earl of Clare brought a bill into parliament, "to prevent the election, or other appointment of conventions, or other unlawful assemblies, under pretence of preparing, or presenting petitions, or other addresses to his majesty or the parliament." The bill was passed into a law on the 17th of July, and it, for a time, arrested the impending storm, which, from the few regular troops in the kingdom, the government appeared ill prepared to meet.

Though the volunteers of Belfast and its immediate neighbourhood, from their being, as it were, under the eye of a strong military force, had ceased to parade, the drillings of many country corps were continued. Emboldened by the seeming indifference of the government, on the 14th of September, a review of these bodies was appointed to be held on the Northern bank of the Six-mile-water, near Doagh, where was to have been assembled the following corps:—Ballyclare, Ballynure, Ballyeaston, Ballymena, Ballygarvy, Broughshane, Brusilee, Kells, Dunagore, Doagh, Muckamore, Roughfort, and others. A few days previous, boxes filled with ball-cartridges were secretly despatched into the country, to such corps as were known to have serviceable arms, to enable them to resist opposition if any was offered.

The morning proved most tempestuous, the wind was high and cold, and the rain fell in torrents, yet before the hour that the volunteers were to have been upon the field, the 38th regiment, Fermanagh militia, and a detachment of artillery with two pieces of cannon, arrived from Belfast at Doagh. Intelligence of their approach had been received before their arrival, and hence a few companies of volunteers, on their way to the review, were halted, and the contemplated *fete*, which for weeks previous had been the subject of general conversation, was adjourned *sine die*. Such was the final exit of the Irish volunteers, a body of men who associated in 1778–9 for the noblest of purposes—the defence of their country—but who, in 1792–3, becoming fascinated by the levelling principles

of the French revolution, in imitation of their "National Guards," appeared determined to become legislators—and on the ruins of the government, to establish a republic on the model of that of France.

On the 14th of November, the Hon. Simon Butler, and Archibald H. Rowan, Esq., arrived in Belfast from Edinburgh, where they had been attending a meeting of the Scotch convention. They were splendidly entertained at dinner by the gentlemen of the town, and on the health of Mr. Rowan being given, in connection with the sentiment, "May the friends of liberty ever be found virtuous and brave," he rose, and in the course of a speech, delivered with great energy, he said, "If the present government, or any government of the country, should offer them a *carte blanche* to fill up their own outline of a free constitution, they should refuse to accept of it from them, unless they were permitted to form their constitution on the model of the French primary assemblies." From the high rank and honourable character of the speaker, and as an influential leaded of the *United Irishmen*, it is believed his words may be fairly taken as a specimen of the views of their leaders at that period. On this occasion the four societies of *United Irishmen* of Belfast, presented an address to the Hon. Simon Butler, expressive of the high sense they entertained of his firm and patriotic conduct, during, and since his imprisonment, to which he returned a most satisfactory answer.

On the 3rd of January, 1794, Hugh Boyd, Esq., Ballycastle, was chosen, without opposition, one of the members in parliament for the county of Antrim, in room of the right Hon. John O'Neill, who, on the 30th of the previous November, was raised to the peerage. Early in March, a bill that had been brought into the House of Commons by W. B. Ponsonby, for promoting a more equal representation of the people in parliament, was rejected by a great majority on the plea of the evils that had arisen from the introduction of the principles of reform in France, many well-meaning persons opposing that measure from a fear of the consequences of so sudden and great a change being the first step towards the ruin of the empire.

In April, the Rev. William Jackson, an Irish clergyman of

the established church, "an envoy from the French government to the Irish patriots," was arrested in Dublin for high treason, as he was about to set out for Cork. His arrest excited the most serious forebodings among the disaffected in Dublin with whom he had been in confidence, but who they now suspected of being a spy. Under this impression, Archibald H. Rowan, Esq., then confined in Newgate for a seditious libel, effected his escape by duping the turnkey, fearing to be immediately charged with treason. [b] Mr. Rowan embarked at Sutton on board a fishing wherry, and landed in France at a small bay called Roseoff, where he was made prisoner, and detained some time as an English spy. [c]

Much speculative anxiety prevailed about this time throughout Ulster in consequence of a considerable number of the freeholders of the county of Antrim being summoned to Dublin to serve as jurors on the trial of the proprietors of the *Northern Star*, for publishing a seditious libel. This trial took place on the 28th of May, and on the jurors being called over, two of them, Hugh Lyle and John Haltridge, were objected to by the crown-lawyers. No challanges were made by the defendants. On the part of the crown it was stated, "That they, the proprietors, tending to stir up discontent and sedition among his Majesty's subjects, and to cause it to be believed that there is not any government legally constituted" in this kingdom, did, on the 15th December, 1792, publish, or cause to be published, a wicked, malicious, and seditious libel,

[b] In the Hibernian Magazine for that month (May), was a picture of his flight, with a song written on the occasion, the second verse of which thus describes Mr. Rowan :—

"In Green-street chambers lodging, tho' mighty sore against his will,
In freedom's path long trudging, and using both his tongue and quill;
Lived late a man, who no one, who knew him well, could bear in spite,
The famous Hamy Rowan, who scampered off on May-day-night.

"Miss Diana in a tower, was closely kept by her papa,
But in a golden shower, it is said Jove he got in—O la;
This story Hamy reading, it in his mind did incite,
To come within succeeding, on a rejoicing May-day-night.

"Then in a hurry-burry, as soon as Hamy's flight was known,
It was wondered next day early, which way the prisoner could be gone;
They followed to Dunleary, to Bush, and over the Atlantic quite,
And was in a quandary where he had gone on May-day-night."

[c] Autobiography of Archibald H. Rowan, p. 219.

entitled the "Declaration and Resolutions of the Irish Jacobins." On behalf of the proprietors it was urged, that the evidence before the court could only apply to the printer, John Rabb, and the jury coinciding in this opinion, the proprietors were acquitted. Rabb being out on bail did not appear to surrender himself, and his recognizance were estrated. [d] For some time previous the leading society of *United Irishmen* in Dublin met in Taylor's-hall, Back-lane, but on the night of the 23rd of May they were dispersed by the city Sheriffs, Alderman Warren, and High Constable Carleton, and their books and papers carried away.

In Belfast efforts were continued for the seduction of the army, and in June were so far successful, that a mutiny broke out in the 79th regiment, quartered in that town, among whom had been distributed anonymous inflammatory hand-bills, tending to deceive them, and to promote disaffection. Two hundred guineas reward were offered by the inhabitants for the discovery of the persons who had distributed these papers among the soldiery, but no disclosure was made. However, on the arrival of their colonel, a few days after, all disorder ceased, and the regiment being embarked for Bristol, this scheme for promoting confusion fell to the ground.

On the 17th November, an information that had been filed against the proprietors of the *Northern Star*, for publishing the address of the society of *United Irishmen* of Dublin to the volunteers of Ireland, came on in the court of King's Bench before a respectable jury of the county Antrim. The jury, after two hours deliberation, returned a verdict of "Guilty of publishing, but not with a malicious intent," which verdict not being accepted by the court, the jury again retired, and returned a verdict of not guilty.

Having, as we conceive, demonstrated that the leading members of the *United Irishmen* were, from their institution, bent on revolutionary projects, and kept up a treasonable correspondence with France, we resume our narrative where we left off, in March, 1795, when we find the *Northern Star* thus recording the formidable progress of their friends: "It

[d] This trial was afterwards the subject of a severe satire, written by Counsellor Sampson, entitled, "A faithful report of the trial of Hurdy Gurdy."—*Northern Star.*

cannot but be a matter of proud exultation to the societies of *United Irishmen*, that the whole people of Ireland, with exceptions scarce worth mentioning, are now of those very opinions which they broached three years ago, and which were then considered by the wise, the constitutional, the moderate, and the cautious, as symptoms not only of madness, but of wickedness, in the extreme."

After several adjournments, on the 23rd of April, the Rev. William Jackson was put upon his trial in the court of King's Bench, Dublin, for high treason. It appeared in evidence, that he had arrived in London from Paris about the end of January, 1794, on a special mission from the committee of *Salut Publique*, *i. e.*, the committee of public salvation. That he was instructed to wait on "the Irish patriots, and to promise, if the people of Ireland were inclined to reform the abuses of their government by a declaration of independence, that the French government would assist them in any way they might deem proper, and would desire no farther interference." [e] Before leaving France he had been furnished with letters of introduction from J. H. Stone to his brother Wm. Stone, in London, John Horne Tooke, and Dr. Crawford, of the same city. In London he passed by his own name for an American merchant, where he revived an old acquaintance with an attorney named Cockayne, to whom he disclosed his mission, who informed the government of his designs, and on the solicitation of Mr. Pitt he agreed to accompany Jackson to this country. Before their setting out, arrangements were made with William Stone for the transmission of any letters that Jackson might have occasion to send to the continent, with the superscription, "*Mens Chapau Rouge, Merchand, Hamburgh.*" This person was to forward the letters to Mr. Benjamin Beresford, at Basle, in Switzerland, who was to find means to convey them to Paris. William Stone, in writing to Jackson to address him by the name of Thomas Popkins, and in his correspondence, instead of his own name, that of William Enots, the latter part being simply that of Stone reversed.

Matters being thus digested, Jackson and his companion set forward to Dublin, where they arrived on the 1st of April.

[e] Trial of Jackson; Autobiography of Archibald H. Rowan, pp. 210, 211.

Immediately after we find them in correspondence with Theobald W. Tone, Archibald H. Rowan, Leonard M'Anally, Edward J. Lewins, Hon. Simon Butler, James Reynolds, M.D., Cookstown, [f] and other active leaders of the *United Irishmen*. Assisted by the two former gentlemen, a memoir was drawn out on the state of the country, for the purpose of its being transmitted to Amsterdam, and from thence to Paris. On the information given by Cockayne, the memoir was intersepted at the post-office. On the night of the 24th of April, Jackson was arrested, on which Mr. Rowan, then in prison, contrived to effect his escape. The original of this report was written out by Mr. Tone, but that put into the post-office was in the hand-writing of Mr. Rowan. When in treating of the different religious sects in this kingdon, it was said: "'The Dissenters' are the most enlightened body of the nation, they are steady republicans, devoted to liberty, and through all the stages of the French revolution have been enthusiastically attached to it;" and it was also stated, that on the French landing, "the north would rise to a man," and that "the militia, the great body of whom were Roman Catholics, would, to a moral certainty, abandon their leaders."[g]

Jackson was found guilty of high treason, and on his being brought up on the 30th, before sentence, he died in the dock, having that morning taken "a large quantity of arsenic and aquafortis mixed in tea. He had a splendid funeral, and, to the astonishment of Dublin, it was attended by several members of parliament and barristers," who gave this presumptive proof that they were friendly to his mission. [h]

[f] He was summoned before a secret committee of the House of Lords, but refusing to be examined upon oath as to the state of Ulster, he was committed to prison, where he remained until the 27th of July. On the 20th of December, same year, we find him chairman of the leading society of *United Irishmen* in Dublin, and also afterwards we find his name to an address to the people of Ireland on the subject of universal sufferage.—*Proceedings of the United Irishmen of Dublin*, March 25th, 1793.

[g] Trial of Jackson.

[h] Two of the barristers here alluded to were John and Henry Shiers. In the *Morning Post* of that day, Jackson's father was said to have, at one time, officiated in the Prerogative Court, Dublin, and his brother to have been Dr. Richard Jackson, vicar-general to the Archbishop of Cashel. For a time he had been private secretary to the celebrated Duchess of Kingston, and had been employed by her in writing against Mr. Foote, who had satirized her in some of his farces. About 1792, he was a contributor to the *Morning Post*, a violent ministerial paper, published in London. On quitting this engagement he went to France.—*Jonah Barrington's sketches*, vol. II. pp. 121, 122.

Although Mr. Tone had throughout borne a prominent part in the proceedings of Jackson, he was not even arrested, and through the interest of some influential friends he was permitted to quit the kingdom, "and to go into exile in America." [i]

Meanwhile, by the 10th of May, the increase in the numbers of the *United Irishmen* was such, that delegates from seventy-two societies met in Belfast, who, in addition to their previous plans, formed a more enlarged "system of committees." These were divided into parochial, baronial, county, provincial, and national, or executive directory, and though the members of the latter were only known to a few, yet their commands were implicitly obeyed. Each of these committees to meet once in every month, and to report their proceedings to their constituents. At this meeting a plan was also devised for raising a common fund, by monthly subscriptions, to be applied for the support of prisoners, and to extend the union. The obligation or test taken by *United Irishmen* likewise underwent an important revision, the words, "a full representation of the people," being inserted, omitting the words, "in the Commons House of Parliament," and changing the original obligation into an oath; or, as it has been expressed, "the substance was so altered as to correspond with the progress of opinion, embracing both republicans and reformers." Thus, to use the words of one of their most zealous friends, the 10th of May "produced the most important consequences to Ireland, and, as such, will be remembered to the latest posterity;" [j] while the *Northern Star* proceeded to demonstrate that the people were ripe for revolution, as the state was ruined.

On the 21st of the same month, Theobald W. Tone arrived in Belfast, on his way to the United States of America. He had probably chosen this circuitous route for the purpose of taking leave of his northern friends, to whom he imparted his intention, on his arrival in the States, namely, to obtain a passport from the French minister, to enable him to proceed to Paris, "to follow up negotiations begun with Jackson," which met "with their perfect approbation." During the stay of Mr. Tone, a series of civic festivals were held in compliment

[i] Life of Theobald W. Tone, vol. I. p. 120.

[j] M'Nevin's pieces of Irish History.

to that gentleman. One of these was an excursion to Ramsisland, and another took place on the summit of M'Arts fort, Cavehill, which was attended by the leading political characters of that town. And here the party took a solemn obligation, never to desist in their efforts until they had subverted the authority of England over this country. [k]

Mr. Tone sailed from Belfast on the 15th of June. Previous to his departure he was loaded with favours by his Belfast friends, and they afterwards remitted him £200, as a subsidy, in order to enable him to carry into effect the arduous enterprize of going to France. In noticing this communication, he says—"They pressed me, in the strongest manner, to fulfil the engagement I had made with them at my departure, and to move heaven and earth to force my way to the French government, in order to supplicate their assistance." [l]

From the great meeting of delegates in Belfast, the proceedings of the *United Irishmen* were conducted with a greater degree of secrecy and circumspection, while the most sanguinary acts of the French were applauded as the triumphs of liberty, and furnished a constant theme of exultation. Their armies were said to be invincible, and specially directed by providence for the extirpation of tyrants and kings, and hence they were called the advanced guard of the liberties of Europe, while their admirers seemed to say,—

"France shows us the way—an example how great;
Then, like France, let us stir up a riot;
May our name be preserved by some damnable fact,
For who but a wretch would be quiet."

In the progress of these events, many of the clergy became equally busied as the other classes of the community. Among the most forward of these was a Roman Catholic priest, who, heedless of the extirpation of his order in France, perambulated the counties of Down and Antrim, preaching in fields. His hearers, on those occasions, commonly amounted to several thousands, and the subject of his discourses were invariably brotherly love, with allusions to the great work going forward for the renovation of mankind. At one of those field musters, the writer witnessed a Presbyterian clergyman dismiss his

[k] Life of Theobald W. Tone.
[l] Ibid.

flock before he had commenced the religious services of the day, and proceed, at their head, to the friar, where, from the multitude assembled, scarce a word could be heard of the preacher's oration. Many of the Presbyterian clergy, also, evinced that they were deeply infected with the popular mania, adopting, in the fullest extent, the levelling principles of the day, and some of their houses of worship were even magazines of arms, where was also matured their most secret treasons. [m]

The country now resounded with blasphemous rhymes, which were called patriotic songs, though, with a few exceptions, they neither possessed the common melody of song, nor smoothness of diction—uncouth curses, strung into equally vulgar verses, being the order of the day. A favourite toast at this time was,—"May the skin of old Geordy (meaning the king) be a drum-head to rouse the republicans to arms."

As the united system gathered strength, many of its votaries threw aside disguise, and in their inordinate love of French politics, avowed their contempt for every ancient right or privilege, and determination of destroying whatever institutions were not truly republican. The most illiterate bumpkin appeared to consider himself a consummate politican, and "inspired with the spirit of pulling down kings and princes." In this levelling spirit, a division of the properties of the wealthy commonly bore a prominent feature, and furnished much interesting speculation. [n] It was openly said, that on a general division of the lands of the kingdom taking place, they were to be free from rent, cess, or tithes! in fact, the chimera of uncontrolled liberty had taken root in the minds of the multitude, who seemed to think, with Jack Cade, that "it was never a merry world since gentlemen came up," and "the good old rule, the simple plan," appeared to be,—

> "That they should keep who have the power,
> And they should get who can."

[m] In the meeting-house of Templepatrick, two brass six-pounder cannon, belonging to the Belfast volunteers, were erected, and in that of Ballyclare met often their secret committees.

[n] Strange as it may appear, the advocates for this system of equality are far from extinct. In 1826, a pamphlet was published in Belfast, entitled, *Our Natural Rights*—for the purpose of shewing the unalienable right that every occupier of land has to the soil he cultivates, and that "the principles of limited ownership is the only remedy for the complicated evils of the old world." The writer concludes with an address to the people

The hair, which for many years had been worn at its length, but tied either clubbed or queued, now began to be cropt short in the manner of the Roundheads during the usurpation of Cromwell. This custom, however, had a direct allusion to the modern politics of France, as so early as January, 1793, we find, in Paris, short hair esteemed a proof of being a good Jacobin.[o] On the introduction of the fashion here, some young persons, who prided themselves on the colour or length of their hair, were refactory to its being cropt, but they were soon compelled to submit by stratagem or force. At length cropt hair was generally adopted, even by females, and in time the custom gave rise to the term croppy, by which name those said to be *United Irishmen* were called by their opponents.

Among the numerous devices of the disaffected for promoting confidence and enthusiasm among the ignorant, were falsehoods and legends, which were called prophecies. These were said to be contained in an ancient manuscript, entitled, *The Irish Chronicle*, written out by the celebrated Saint Columbkille, which work, though no one even pretended to have seen, all appeared to believe in its marvellous predictions.[p] Its fabulous relations were affirmed to point out great events about to take place in Ulster, and the fortunate completion of the national revolution. The parish of Dundonald, county of Down, was particularly noted as the place where several of these prophecies were about to be fulfilled. Here a young maiden, with two thumbs on her right hand, was to sit upon a large stone, and to hold the horses of three kings during a great battle, in which Ireland was to be, as it were, three times lost, but at length won. During this conflict the wheel of an adjoining mill was to be three times turned round with the

of the United States of America, warning them, "that if they do not take measures for prohibiting the absolute ownership of land, their freedom and happiness would silently and gradually fade away." In the same work money is called, "the vile creation of man."

[o] However, on the execution of Robespierre and his party in July, 1794, the fashion changed in Paris, and persons were murdered in the streets because they wore short hair—but the custom continued the same in Ireland.—*Anthologia Hibernica*, vol. I. p. 158; *Autobiography of Archibald H. Rowan*, p. 239.

[p] The writer has lately heard that an old man named Donnelly, who resided in the town of Antrim, had an old Greek book, which he showed to some favourites as this famous chronicle.

blood of the slain. Previous to this great day the maiden was to have crossed the Atlantic ocean three times, which, it was asserted, she had already accomplished. Two common briars growing in the same neighbourhood, at a considerable distance from each other, were also to entwine their branches before this great battle, which union was affirmed to have been perfected—therefore, civil warfare was believed to be at hand.

Visions were also affirmed to have been witnessed at certain places, and many persons were reported to have had strange and prophetic dreams regarding the landing of the French near Belfast, and their victorious progress. It was also given out, that at the dread hour of midnight, lights had been observed in several ancient churches, and that a person, more hardy than his neighbours, on looking in at one of the windows, heard an angel read out of a green book the order for the extirpation of the English interest in Ireland!

In several districts of the counties of Antrim and Derry, two worthless pamphlets, which had become rare, suddenly came into great repute. One of these was entitled, "The prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer," an unintelligable worthy of the olden time, who is said to have flourished in the latter end of the 13th century.[q] His prophecies (as they are called) extant, appear to relate chiefly to the union between England and Scotland. The other tract merely contains an account of the wanderings, persecutions, and ravings of the Rev. Alexander Peden, a Scotch Covenanter, who about 1682, traversed the county of Antrim, and who, like some others of his canny countrymen, had the address to impress his simple hearers with a belief of his being a prophet. The following interesting document proves how highly these pamphlets were regarded at this time.

At a meeting of a society of *United Irishmen*, in the hamlet of Rasharkin, 106 members present, 47 of whom were Roman Catholics, the following resolutions were unanimously entered into:—

"Resolved—That we behold plainly the case of not every one knowing the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer, and the

[q] Thomas Learmond, alias, Thomas of Erildowne, alias, Thomas the Rhymer, has been equally celebrated as a prophet and a poet. However, according to the Irish version of his history, he was born in Ireland, but was stolen away in his infancy to Scotland by the fairies!

prophecies of Alexander Peden, all useful to the people in the making of our laws, and as many of our brethren cannot read them, and explain them, and tell about them;

"Resolved—That Donald O'Kennedy will read to the county of Derry, and that Archy Woods will read to the county of Antrim, and that they tell the French news to everybody, and dispute with all who dare to contradict them. Signed, William Wilson, Secretary." The former of these readers was a Roman Catholic, the latter a Dissenter, which class gave a decided preference to the reading of Peden, while their brethren were equally delighted with the wild dark predictions of the Rhymer.[r]

In order that nothing might be wanting on the revolution breaking out, a guillotine was made by a mechanic in the vicinity of Kilrea, and a list made out of those to be decapitated, or, as it was said, "to oil first the wheels of the revolution for the public good." As in France, the properties of the wealthy were to have been confiscated for the benefit of the republic, and hence, in the language of Robespierre, the guillotine was to have been called the "National Mint,"—a phrase much applauded for the expressive ingenuity of the application. The Kilrea instrument was nearly ten feet in height, its axe sharp and heavy, and about ten inches deep. It was moved up in a groove by a pulley and rope. Lead being scarce, from the great demand of that metal for bullets, the axe was loaded by a piece cut off an old millstone. A few experiments were made by beheading dogs and cats, which being declared satisfactory, the maker was said to have deserved well of his country, and the instrument was carefully deposited in an ark in the corn-mill of Lisnagrat.

Early in December it was announced that an election for a knight of the shire for the county Antrim was about to be held in the room of Hugh Boyd, Esq., deceased. Accordingly, on the 12th of the same month, a meeting of those calling themselves the freeholder's committee, appointed, as they said, in 1792, to guard the country from the baneful influence of the aristocracy, was held in Ballymena, Mr. William Duffin

[r] At this time only about one person out of 300 in those parishes could read.—M.S.

in the chair. They proceeded to declare, that they did "not represent, nor pretend to represent, any person but themselves." Regretted that the meetings of the "immortal volunteer army," had been prohibited; advised the "independent freeholders" of the county not to interfere in contested elections, and, among other reasons given for thus withdrawing themselves, were declared to be the degraded state of the representation, the great body of the people being excluded from the elective franchise, "but above all, that the successive administrations who have borne sway in this country have ever made a pretext of refusing a reform, not because it was improper, but because the people were clamerous."

Richard G. Kerr, Redhall, and John Staples, Esq., offered themselves as candidates to the electors, but the former soon after withdrew. James Murphy, Belfast, an old debilitated toper, was also put forward by some persons as a fit and proper gentleman to represent the county in parliament, and several addresses to the electors, bearing his name, appeared in the newspapers. On the day appointed for holding the election, Mr. Murphy came into court, but, like many others aspiring to be great men, he found himself deserted by his friends, and Mr. Staples was returned without opposition.

About the commencement of 1796, delegates from the Defenders in Dublin arrived in Belfast, for the purpose of promoting an amicable arrangement between that body and the *United Irishmen*, for up to this time, though they were equally hostile to the state, "they had been kept wholly distinct bodies." On the return home of these delegates they made their report to their leaders, which being approved of, the defender system was new modelled, which laid the foundation of the union of those parties a matter of great interest, the organization of the latter embracing "the whole peasantry of Ireland, being Roman Catholics," while, at the same time, nearly 10,000 of the army were "sworn defenders."[s]

The government were probably aware of this junction, as about the same time spies and informers were engaged to discover their secret plans, some of whom becoming suspected of

[s] M'Nevin's pieces of Irish History; Life of Theobald W. Tone, vol. II., pp. 189, 192.

their engagements, fell by the pistol or dagger. New schemes were hence devised by the disaffected to guard against the machinations of these ruffians, and hence committees of assassination were established. [t] However guilty, innocent, or distant, the accused persons might be, they were arraigned by these tribunals, and as rarely any but their enemies could be heard, they seldom escaped conviction. It is nevertheless more than probable that several of the persons thus disposed of were innocent of the crimes with which they were charged, as it is certain some of them were not *United Irishmen*, while the excellent character of others falsified such an infamous imputation. During the winter, considerable disturbance took place in several parishes of the county of Down, particularly in those of Donaghcloney, Dromore, and Dromara, in consequence of threatening letters, robberies, and various depredations said to arise from political causes.

On the 24th of March the insurrection act was passed, which excited a loud and general clamour among the *United Irishmen*. By it the Lord Lieutenant, in council, was authorised to proclaim, on the requisition of seven of its magistrates, assembled at a petty sessions of the peace, any county or district thereof, as in a state of disturbance, and thereby to invest the magistrates with an extraordinary power of seizing, imprisoning, and sending on board the fleet without trial, such persons as should be found at unlawful assemblies, or acting so as to threaten the public tranquility. It required the registry of arms; and magistrates were empowered to search for the like. The information of any prosecutor in behalf of the crown, who might be murdered, was made evidence on the trial of the accused; and any magistrate or peace officer, murdered, while on duty, or in consequence of his exertions to serve the public, the Grand Juries of counties were empowered to levy money off the county for his representatives. When the county or district was declared in a state of disturbance, all persons to keep within their houses, between sunset and sunrise.

[t] The existence of these committees has been denyed by their principal leaders in their memoir, delivered by them to the Irish government in August, 1798. The writer, however, has heard their existence acknowledged by several who were deeply engaged in the political affairs of that day; one of whom, upon a certain occasion, sat president of a club.

In the meantime, the leaders of the disaffected in Belfast continued their earnest exertions to strengthen the common cause, and as "the new system of organization had not, as yet, been carried into complete effect anywhere but in Ulster, the executive committee of which province, holding its sittings in that town, managed the interests of the whole union."[u]

About the end of March, a report was industriously spread, and for a time credited by some, and pretended to be believed by many, that an host of Orangemen[v] were coming from the county Armagh to destroy Belfast, and also "those in the country who had promoted the union of Irishmen," and, in short, all those who adherred to the divine doctrine of "Peace on earth, and good will to all men." This absurd rumour was so far credited that the military guards in Belfast were doubled, and the troops kept ready at a moment's call. During this alarm, a deputation of the late Belfast volunteers waited upon the sovereign, "requesting him to inform General Nugent that they were willing to co-operate with the military under his command,"[w] but their services were not accepted. The editor of the *Northern Star*, when noticing this report, assures his readers that there was sufficient force in Belfast "to annihilate the entire horde" of Orangemen.

Early in April, an itinerant preacher named Gibson, began to traverse the county of Antrim,

"To preach sedition and the Word."

He was of that sect called Covenanters, and commonly lectured in the fields, where his hearers often amounted to several thousands. The religious services of the day, if such they may be called, seldom concluded in less than six hours, and his texts of scripture were always taken from the book of the Revelations, the eighteenth chapter of which seemed to be his favourite. These harangues were always of a political tendency, and the texts applied in such a manner as to impress

[u] Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. I., p. 275.

[v] The name Orangeman originated from the following circumstance:—On the 21st September, 1795, a battle took place near Portadown, at a place called the Diamond, between the Peep-o'day-boys and Defenders, in which the former were victors, and the first Orange lodge was formed on the same day, "on the field of battle;" but an association of a similar stamp had been formed some time previous by a person of the name of Wilson.—*Kirkpatrick's Origin of Orange Lodges*, pp. 235, 236.

[w] Northern Star.

his hearers that it was the word of God which inculcated upon them certain duties, while, in reality, they were inflamed to deeds of rebellion, tyranny, and murder. On entering upon his mission, he, at times, so far forgot himself as to relapse for a moment into his holy hatred of popery, by introducing the antiquated dogmas of his sect, in allusions to the man of sin, and an old jade dressed in scarlet, dyed with the blood of the saints, said to reside near Babylon. These untimely slips of his reverence were overlooked by the hearers with a truly Christian forbearance, for which kindness he was afterwards sure to make amends by pointing out the immediate destruction of the British monarchy. Gibson was at length removed by his employers to some other circuit, and was succeeded by a preacher of the same sect named Orr, who proved himself equally zealous in the discharge of his missionary labours. [x]

Though it was notorious that seditious meetings were held, and that the *United Irishmen* continued to increase, at the spring assizes for the county of Antrim, the Grand Jury, stepping out of "the noiseless tenor of their way," published an address to the inhabitants, complimenting them on their loyalty to the best of kings, and the peaceable state of the county. We have been unable to discover the object of the jurors in this address. Were they afraid to avow that they knew treasonable practices were pressing forward, or did they, in the simplicity of their loyalty, imagine that they could cajole the people to lay aside a system in which they were solemnly leagued?

About the end of April, a proposition was made from the executive directory of the French republic, by Theobald W. Tone, then in Paris, to the persons then directing the Irish union, that they were disposed to assist them in their plan to revolutionize the kingdom. [y] A meeting of the Irish executive

[x] Dr. M'Nevin, in his pieces of Irish history, says the Covenanters were "republicans by religion and descent," and were "the most active promoters of the system."

[y] This proposal was probably brought over by a person named Aherne, who had previously been employed on a similar mission to Scotland, and who, about this time, was sent on a mission to this country. Prior to his setting out, Mr. Tone furnished him with a list of friends to call upon, among whom were C. Teeling, S. Neilson, and R. S., perhaps Robert Simms.—Mr. Tone landed at Wilmington from Belfast, August, 1st, 1795. On the 1st of January, 1796, he embarked at Sandyhook, for Havre, where he ar-

directory was immediately convened to take into consideration this proposal, who returned for answer, that they accepted their kind offer. This answer was despatched by a special messenger named Lewins, and still farther assurances were given of the friendly dispositions of the French government, and that ample succours would be sent as soon as they could be got ready. To hasten these intentions, in the latter end of May, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor, Esq., departed, by different routes, for the continent, and at Basle, in Switzerland, near the French frontier, they had an interview with General Hoche, where is believed to have been finally settled the treaty for the armament, which, in the following December, made its appearance in Bantry Bay.[z]

A short time prior to this communcation, a meeting of delegates from the different half baronies of the counties of Down and Antrim had been held in Belfast, who gave in their reports to an official gentleman appointed to receive them, regarding the general feelings of the people in case of an invasion of the kingdom by the French. These reports were decidedly favourable to such a measure, and it was declared that the mass of the people anxiously looked forward for the auspicious day.

At the summer assizes held for the county of Antrim, the Grand Jury noticed that a "spirit of riot and depredation" existed in a part of the county. James Livingston, a blacksmith, was found guilty of posting up and publishing, on the door of his shop, at Bushmills, a seditious libel entitled, "*Liberty and Equality*," calling upon the people to plant the tree of liberty instead of a crown of tyranny. He was sentenced to be imprisoned one year, to stand three times in the pillory, viz. :—in the towns of Ballymoney, Ballymena, and

rived on the 2nd of February, and proceeded direct to Paris. Immediately after we find him negotiating with the French directory for the invasion of this kingdom. In December following he was on board one of the French ships that entered Bantry Bay. In July, 1797, he was at the Texel in the admiral's ship, but that expedition being given up in September, 1798, he sailed from Camaret Bay in the Hoche, which ship was, on the 11th of October, taken off the coast of Donegall by the squadron of Sir John B. Warren. —*Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August* 21*st*, 1798; *Life of Theobald W. Tone*, vol. II., pp. 90, 91.

[z] Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, August, 30, 1798; Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. I., p. 280.

Belfast, but from the popular feeling in his favour the pillory seemed rather a triumph than a punishment.

Soon after, the common ferment was greatly heightened by arrests in Belfast, and its vicinity, of persons reputed to be leaders of the *United Irishmen*. On the morning of the 16th September, a king's messenger, the Marquis of Downshire, the Earl of Westmeath, and Lord Castlereagh [a] arrived in that town. Immediately after, the numerous garrison of horse, foot, and artillery, were under arms, and the following persons were arrested for high treason:—Samuel Neilson, Thomas Russell, Henry Haslett, Samuel Kennedy, Daniel Shanaghan, John Young, James Barcley, and Rowley Osbourne. Charles H. Teeling and Samuel Musgrave, Lisburn, were also taken prisoners on the same day on a similar charge. In the evening all the prisoners were sent off to Dublin in post-chaises, under an escort of dragoons. These arrests were soon after followed by that of many other persons in the counties of Down, Antrim, and Derry, all on treasonable charges, who were mostly confined in the jails of their respective counties, and many fled, or, for a time, kept under cover.

On the alarm occasioned by these proceedings having, in some degree, subsided, a novel system was adopted by the friends of the prisoners to testify their respect for them, and their attachment to the principles for which they were immured. This was strikingly exemplified in the numbers of those who attended to reap the corn, or to raise the potatoes—or, in fact, any other work supposed to stand behind, or to require help in consequence of the absence of the owner. These assemblages usually varied from 500 to 2000 persons, among whom were always a number of females decorated with green ribbons, handkerchiefs, and the like, and, at times, a Presbyterian minister was seen in the crowd. At Sivatragh, county of Derry, in raising the potatoes of a Mrs. Clark, whose son was in prison charged with seditious practices, the Rev. John Smith, minister of Kilrea, was observed busied gathering potatoes in his new castor hat! On finishing the labours of the field, these bodies commonly proceeded in regular order,

[a] In the Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Right Hon. Henry Grattan, vol. I., it is stated that Lord Castlereagh was, on their origin, "a member of the society of *United Irishmen*, and drank the republican toasts of the day."

four or six men deep, through the neighbouring towns and villages, each digger carrying his spade on his shoulder, and accompanied by the sounding of horns, conch shells, and long glass tubes called trumpets. No spirituous liquors were taken on those occasions, and, in a few instances, where the like were exposed for sale in the fields, the owners retired without selling one glass!

Throughout the previous summer several itinerant Covenanted clergy continued their harangues in the fields, which appear, at length, to have created some alarm in the moderate portion of that community, as on the 3rd of October, the following advertisement appeared in the *Northern Star*, but though in the language of the official paper of a sect, it bore no signatures:—"*A Seasonable and Necessary Information.* At a critical period such as the present is, when the public mind is much agitated, and so many false alarms in circulation, we, the members of the reformed church, called Presbyterian Dissenters, (reproachfully called Mountainmen), hold it as our duty to step forward, and, from conscience, publicly declare that we hold it in the highest abhorrence and detestation, all tumultuous and disorderly meetings; and we utterly disclaim all connection with such, whether publicly or privately held, where anything is said or done that is prejudicial to the peace, the safety, or property of any individual or society. Done in the name of the reformed church in the counties of Antrim and Down, October 3rd, 1796." As might have been expected, this paper had no effect in restraining the political orations of their reverences, at least three of whom were now holding forth in the fields.

On the 15th of October, the habæs corpus act was suspended, and at the same time printed hand-bills were circulated about the country by the government, to such gentlemen as might be supposed to take a part in the formation of yeomanry corps; but from the influence of the *United Irishmen*, for some time little progress was made. On the night of the 28th of the same month, the king's stores in Belfast were broken into, and ten casks of gunpowder carried away. About the same time caricatures of the armed yeomenry were spread about by persons from Belfast, and printed papers were posted up at

meeting-houses, and other public places, cautioning the people to be obedient to the laws, as their implacable enemies wished to goad them into an insurrection.

In order to counteract the arming of the yeomanry, which at length began to make some progress, the *United Irishmen* also adopted a military organization. Each regiment consisted of one colonel, one major, six captains, and 600 men. Great pains were taken to have proper men for serjeants, who hence were generally the most active and intelligent men in the corps. There exertions, at this time, were greatly emboldened by the recent arrival of Lewins, their messenger, from Paris, with an assurance that a large fleet, with 15,000 land forces on board, and adequate arms and stores, might soon be expected. The most strenuous efforts were, therefore, continued to perfect their arrangements to take the field. Pike-heads were forged in great quantities, and, in several places, the arms of the military were stolen from their quarters. [b]

Among the numerous devices instituted at this time by the disaffected to forward their plans, perhaps one of the most singular was societies of *United Irishwomen*. The chief object in establishing these societies was by an obligation to keep their tongues quiet as to what they might hear or see regarding political affairs, to communicate such news as they might learn, and to collect, from each society, a subscription to the common fund. By their friends these meetings were commonly called tea-pot-clubs, and some venerable matrons are said to have introduced their daughters into society by the endearing names of Miss Liberty and Miss Equality. Judging from the violent language of those amazons, they were anxious for an opportunity to rival, by deeds of the dagger, the "*Dames de la Halle*," and the "*Poissardes*," those valuable allies of the French revolution. [c]

On the 6th of November, the Lord Lieutenant and council

[b] Parties of the 24th dragoons were disarmed in this way at Ballymoney, county Antrim, and Cumber, county of Down.

[c] This love of massacre among the females appears to have been everywhere common throughout France. To such lengths did this spirit proceed, that in Normandy women were seen fighting who should, cannibal-like, devour the yet throbbing heart of a young man that they had butchered, their landlord, whose only crime was having been born noble!—*Lady Wallace's Letters to her Son.*

issued a proclamation forbidding the assembling of the people under the pretence of reaping corn or digging potatoes. Nevertheless, on Saturday the 12th of the same month, a considerable number of persons, with spades, met at Stoneyford, and proceeded, accompanied by martial music and a green flag, they commenced digging up the potatoes of Jeremy Galway, against whom a warrant had been issued for treasonable practices. On intelligence of this muster, the Rev. Phillip Johnson, Derriaghy, a magistrate, accompanied by six dragoons and a number of armed men from his neighbourhood, reputed Orangemen, proceeded to disperse them. Forty-four potato diggers were taken prisoners, who were soon after liberated on their taking the oath of allegiance. [d] On the same day Lord O'Neill, governor of the county Antrim, and seventeen magistrates, assembled in the town of Antrim to deliberate on the agitated state of the county. Their worhsips afterwards published some trifling resolutions, and met again in Ballymena on the 23rd, where their resolves were equally futile and uninteresting. In the interim, twenty-four magistrates of the county of Down assembled at Killyleagh, and declared the parishes of Seapatrick, Moira, Maralin, Aghaderg, Tullylisk, and Donaghcloney out of the peace. About this time an Irishman named M'Sheehy was despatched from Brest on board of an American vessel bound for Dublin, to acquaint the leaders of the *United Irishmen* with the forward state of the expedition designed for this kingdom,[e] and, of course, with the time it was expected to put to sea.

Meanwhile the disaffected continued their prepartions with, if possible, still greater diligence—the smiths in forging pike-heads, and the others in cutting timber at night for their shafts, and each member was to be ready at a moment's call. The want of powder and lead continued to be severely felt; the former, however, was occasionally obtained, at most exorbitant prices, from smugglers who brought it over from Scotland

[d] The *Northern Star* of the 14th of November, when noticing this affair, says: "They were raising the potatoes of a poor widow;" and the *Press* newspaper of the 21st December, 1797, when alluding to their dispersion as an unexemplified act of tyranny and outrage, says, the people were "busy in the god-like work of digging up the potatoes of a poor woman."

[e] Life of Theobald W. Tone, vol. II., p. 230.

by the way of Cantyre, while, in the scarcity of the latter, the leaden weights were taken from the country dealers' counters, the leaden statues stolen from gentlemen's gardens, and the lead from the grocers' tea chests was eagerly sought after as a supply. [f]

Early in December it was confidently asserted that a special commission was about to be issued for the trials, at Christmas, of the state prisoners confined in the jail of the county of Antrim. As no such event was contemplated by the government, it is probable that this report originated in their expected release by the French, and proves, in some degree, how generally an invasion was looked for at that season.

On the 20th of the same month, the following extraordinary proceeding took place at Kilrea:—A wretched vagrant named M'Caul, who, a few years after, was transported for stealing cattle, made oath before the Rev. John Torrens, that seven persons whom he named were captains in the army of the *United Irishmen*. The persons accused, fully aware of the danger to which they were exposed by the machinations of such a ruffian, fled, and their flight was immediately proclaimed by his reverence as an indubitable proof of their guilt. A few days afterwards, a detachment of the Kerry militia arrived at Kilrea, and, under the direction of Mr. Torrens, they proceeded to set fire to the house of James Stewart, one of the persons who had fled. The houses of two of the others sworn against by M'Caul being connected with others, were not burned, but their scanty furniture was carried out and consumed. During these proceedings his worship observed in a jocular way to those near him, "boys I have made you a good bonfire." [g] These proceedings were briefly noticed at the time in the *Northern Star*, but except by the miserable sufferers, they seemed soon forgotten amidst the common ferment occasioned by the report that a French fleet had arrived at Cork.

[f] A leaden statue was taken at night from the garden of Castleward, county of Down.

[g] This affair was briefly noticed at the time in the *Northern Star;* and in that paper of the 23rd of January, 1797, it is said, that at a meeting of magistrates at Magherafelt, on the 16th of January, thanks were returned to the Rev. John Torrens, "for his spirited and proper conduct as a magistrate in suppressing sedition."—*M. S.*

On the 27th of December, it was rumoured in Belfast that a fleet of large ships, supposed to be French, had come to anchor in Bantry Bay on the evening of the 23rd. By the 29th the report had increased, and on the morning of the 30th, John Brown, Esq., sovereign, communicated to the gentlemen on 'Change the contents of a letter that he had received from the chief secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, confirming this alarming intelligence. Mr. Brown now urged those present to form a yeomanry corps on the conditions that had been prescribed by the government. To this it was replied, that they were ready to serve as they had formerly done as volunteers, for the protection of persons and properties, but that they could not, without doing violence to their consciences, take an oath to support faithfully the present laws, which would include the gunpowder bill, convention bill, and others of a similar tendency. After much conversation of a like kind, it was agreed that a meeting of the inhabitants should be held at the Exchange on the following day, and in the interval it was said in the *Northern Star*, "We have the pleasure of informing our readers, that the whole of the intelligence respecting the French fleet being on the southern coast of the island is false."

On the people again assembling, the great room of the Exchange was soon crowded to excess, and the sovereign having taken the chair, stated to the meeting the alarming state of the country, and again submitted to them the propriety of their taking up arms against the common enemy. He was followed by the Rev. William Bristow, who urged the necessity of the measure, and entered into an explanation regarding armed associations, which he alleged had been generally misunderstood. He concluded by hoping that the inhabitants would prove how ill-founded had been the reports circulated regarding them, and that they would be found at their post in the hour of need.

It was now proposed by William Sampson, Esq., a barrister, that a committee should be appointed to take into consideration the business before the meeting, which motion was supported by Mr. R. Thompson and Arthur O'Connor, Esq. The latter spoke at great length in support of Counsellor Sampson's motion. He said he could not let the opportunity escape

of joining with the inhabitants, when met, to consider what measures were best to be adopted for the good of their country and in support of their rights. And he would take this, and every opportunity of showing his disapprobation of the present administration, the most detestable that had ever disgraced any country. He approved of the proposal of a committee, because it afforded time for the inhabitants to deliberate on the propriety of such measures as might be adopted; he wished them to be cautious in determining—but when they did determine, he wished they would be firm. The present administration, he remarked, had oppressed the people, but he hoped the time would come when he would have an opportunity of vindicating their rights. It was his determination, that whenever he could discover what were the sentiments of the majority of the people, with them he would go. In conclusion, they were informed that he had just received a letter from Cork, which took no notice of an enemy's fleet being upon the coast.

The question, on being put, was carried with loud acclamations by a great majority. A committee was then appointed, consisting of the sovereign, Rev. William Bristow, Robert Thompson, J. C. White, William Tennant, Robert Simms, Gilbert M'Ilveen, Wm. Sampson, and Arthur O'Connor, Esqrs. They were to meet on Sunday morning, at ten o'clock, to draw up such resolutions as they might judge proper; and the meeting was then adjourned until Monday. At times this assemblage was rather tumultuous, and some opposition was made to Mr. O'Connor addressing them, as he was not an inhabitant of the town; threats were used of throwing the Hon. Chichester Skeffington, collector of the customs of the port, out of one of the windows.[h] However, before the people dispersed, they were addressed by —— Tumley, Esq., who at once came to the chief business about which they had met. After some preliminary observations, he said, that those who believed that the French were not upon the coast, had nothing to fear, and might return to their homes in peace; but those who, like himself, were of a contrary opinion, he thought had better look to themselves. It was immediately purposed

[h] Belfast Monthly Magazine, vol. XI., p. 322.

by Mr. Thomas Whinnery, that a book should be opened where those disposed to take up arms, agreeable to the terms offered by the government, should subscribe their names. This proposal being seconded by Mr. Tumley, about 120 names were then enrolled, for the purpose of forming a troop of cavalry and a corps of infantry. For the former, Charles Rankin was chosen captain, and for the other Robert Wallace, Esq. Two other companies of infantry were soon after embodied in Belfast, of the one John Brown was captain, and of the other Robert Batt, Esq.

Agreeable to adjournment, a considerable number of persons met at the Exchange, but that building being incapable of containing a tenth of those present, the meeting was adjourned to the White-linen-hall; but no arrangements having been made there to receive such a multitude, they assembled in front of the hall in the street. The sovereign not attending to take the chair, and several gentlemen mentioned as chairmen declining that honour, Mr. Sampson proceeded to address the people in the following words:—

"Gentlemen, as one of your committee, chosen by you to deliberate for you, and in your name, upon the most important of all subjects, where and in what manner, and how far, and for what you are to risk your lives. Sensible of the importance of this charge, when you have been sleeping in your beds, I have been awake in mine. Since your last meeting, two of your committee have seceded from us, and your chief magistrate has left you to yourselves, the very gentleman who called you first together, for what purpose, or with what views, it would best become themselves to have stood forth to say—I cannot see them among you. It is necessary for you to know this matter. It is regard to your safety and your character that would alone induce me to be obtrusive for an instant. There are some men malignant enough to hold you out just now as a disorderly assembly. The shame lie on their heads, who brought you here, and then deserted you. But, gentlemen, I doubt not that your dignified temper and forbearance from inveighing even against those that have ill-treated you, will give a wholesome lesson to a few proud individuals; themselves are but the shadow of your body, and that in the good

sense, the firmness, and the virtue of the many is to be found the peace and honour of the country. Remember, that the first step towards reform is to reform yourselves, and that before we pretend to control the vices of our rulers, we should be able to control our own passions.

I am sorry, my friends, to see so many wealthy and distinguished men amongst you; I could have wished if it had so happened that you had all been of the poorer class, that that which among any other people, similarly placed, could not have been expected, might be more eminently contrasted with that of those who effect to look down upon you, and despise you. It is to you that are poor, therefore, that these observations are addressed by one who loves you, to guard you against the rancorous calumnies and snares of those that hate you. Gentlemen, you have already debated the matter, whether we should put ourselves under the command of our government and offer our lives without condition or qualification of any kind. To this you have been exhorted by the example of the venerable Earl of Charlemont. I will detract nothing from the merits of that venerable Earl, but I see among you the genuine originators of the Irish volunteers; and, besides, the danger of being led by an individual. I remind you of this which you well know, that it was not Lord Charlemont that raised the volunteers, it was the volunteers that raised Lord Charlemont; and had Lord Charlemont abided by the volunteers, there would have been little occasion for a yeoman bill, and little room for the deliberation we have had. By the same steps that men raise themselves upon the honest cause of the people, by the same steps do they descend when they forsake it. Follow you the example of the volunteers, who adorned, preserved, and civilized their country, who, to this moment, are the flower of all their country. Be like them, brave and generous, discreet and wise; stand fast together, compacted in the firm bond of union and affection; be loyal and true-hearted to each other, and the proudest he in all this land will not be long too proud to follow you. But it is said, it is against the law to act as a volunteer, and an act of parliament has been read to you, from which that argument has been inferred. It were to be wished that every act of parliament should be so

penned as to carry its meaning clearly to the meanest apprehension; but I, for my part, can see nothing in that, or any other act to justify the inference. You have been threatened, unless you forced your consciences to take the oath, to have your town demolished. For some time a report has been in circulation, that the government were about to destroy Belfast. This threat might determine a conscientious man never to take it. You have been threatened to be deprived of the king's peace. Friends, whatever share of the king's peace may be allowed you, keep peace among yourselves, I do beseech you; whilst you do so, men of sense and spirit will be with you. For my part, were there no man by me, whose coat was better than the worst of yours, whilst you entrench yourselves within the line of your acknowledged rights, be virtuous, orderly, discreet, and wise, and may I be forsaken of every thing that's good, if I forsake you. You are told to wipe off the stigma affixed upon your town. If any, besides the envious and unjust, have received evil impressions of you, it is to be lamented; but for the rest, when you consider for what you are calumniated, by whom and by what means your are calumniated, you must feel those calumnies to be most exquisite praise. Some few have shown a forwardness to swear, and many a marked determination not to do so; every man must be the best judge of his own principles and scruples, and we should learn to tolerate each other. We have been charged to draw up such resolutions as we of your committee judged most likely to produce perfect unanmity. For the sake of that perfect union of sentiment so necessary to Ireland, and chiefly to the richer order, who have most at stake, we have adopted resolutions, not framed upon the spur of the occasion, but long since prepared by grave and deliberate men for the adoption of this and any other counties; and if I am rightly informed, with the approbation of those of the highest station in the county."[i]

Mr. Sampson having finished his oration, he was unanimously called to the chair, and the resolutions being read, were adopted without opposition. They were as follows:—

[i] In the Memoirs of William Sampson, written by himself, these resolutions are said to have been written by John, first Lord O'Neill.—*Northern Star.*

1st. Resolved—That the imperfect state of the representation in the House of Commons is the primary cause of the discontent at present existing in this country.

2nd. That the public mind would be restored to tranquility, and every impending danger effectually averted by such a reform in parliament as would secure to population and property their due weight in the scale of government, without distinction on account of religious opinions.

3rd. That a determination firmly manifested on the part of government to comply with the just desires of the people—whose object is reform alone—and thereby constitute the only rampart of defence that can bid complete defiance to the efforts of foreign and domestic enemies.

4th. That such a change in the system of government would give to property, law, and religion, and the necessary distinctions of rank, additional stability and weight, and that no opinion can be entertained by the people so dangerous as the despair of not succeeding in their constitutional exertions to obtain the most important object of their views. [j]

5th. That we conceive a government of king, lords, and commons—the commons being thus reformed—when wisely and honestly administered, capable of affording every happiness a nation can enjoy.

6th. That we are ready, if permitted by government, to arm in like manner as the volunteers, whose memory we revere, and whose example we wish to imitate.

Resolved—That the chairman be requested to wait on the sovereign with a copy of their resolutions, and to request him,

[j] The corrupt state of the Irish representation, from the time of its decayed and rotten boroughs, had long been a subject of just complaint with those really reformers. By a return of the state of the representation made by the volunteers in 1783, it appeared, that of 300 members, of which the House of Commons consisted, only seventy-two were returned by the free election of the people, as fifty-three persons nominated 124 members, and influenced the choosing of ten others. Fifty commoners nominated ninety-one, and influenced three. Mr. Grattan asserted in the House, and no one denied, that 200 members were returned by individuals, from forty to fifty, by ten persons, and that several of the boroughs had no resident electors. In the state of the representation published by the *United Irishmen* in October, 1792, they say seventeen boroughs have no resident electors; sixteen have but one; sixteen have from two to five; ninety have thirteen electors each; ninety persons return for 106 venal boroughs; that is 212 out of 300, the whole number. At Bannow, county Wexford, there was not even a house, and when notice of an election arrived, it was posted on the ruins of an old chimney, amidst a drifting desert of sand!

in the name of the meeting, to communicate the same to the Lord Lieutenant, and solicit permission for the inhabitants to arm themselves, agreeably to the above resolutions.

To this request the sovereign refused to comply. He had taken no part in the business of the committee, and the Rev. William Bristow had also declined having anything to do with their proceedings. The committee, in fact, was so constituted that it was impossible they could have agreed on any measure for the defence of the nation. At least two of them had been notoriously engaged in promoting that very invasion now the cause of alarm, the one by remitting money to Mr. Tone for that purpose, and the other by arranging, on the continent, the treaty for the expedition with General Hoche, commanding the troops on board of the enemy's fleet. [k] A

[k] The French fleet, under the command of Admiral Morard de Galles, consisting of forty-three sail, viz., seventeen sail of the line, thirteen frigates, and the remainder corvettes and transports, sailed from Brest on the night of the 16th December, 1796. In order to avoid the English, four of whose vessels had been observed in the offing on the previous day, they passed out by a dangerous way called the *Raz*, where one of their ships was lost. On the morning but eighteen of their fleet were in company, and the day being fine they steered W.N.W., at the rate of five or six knots an hour; on the 18th there was a close fog; on the 19th, during a dead calm, about sixteen sail were seen at a distance, which were discovered, by signal, to be the vessels missing. Early on the morning of the 21st they were only about four leagues from Cape Clear with a favourable wind. About this time the Kangaroo sloop of war passed through the enemys fleet, and on the 22nd she landed an officer at Crookhaven with despatches for Admiral Kingsmill, and then shaped her course for England. The Admiral, on receiving the intelligence that an enemy's fleet was upon the coast, directed the Rush revenue cutter, a remarkable fast sailor, to take the officer of the Kangeroo on board, and make the best of her way to the nearest English land. She sailed on the 24th, but was obliged to return on Monday, after suffering much from the tempest. However, she again sailed on the 29th, and after a passage of twenty-three hours she arrived at Kingsroad. The Kangaroo was so disabled by the storm, that she did not reach Portsmouth for some days after.

On the morning of the 22nd, sixteen of the enemy's fleet, nine or ten of which were of the line, entered Bantry bay, with a strong wind at east. These were mostly of the eighteen vessels noticed above, afterwards the other vessels of the fleet also arrived, except one ship of line and three frigates; on board of one of the latter was the chief admiral and General Hoche, commander of the land forces employed in the expedition. During the night a servant of Richard White, Esq., Seafield, near Bantry, rode, in four hours, forty-two Irish miles into Cork, to General Dalrymple, with the intelligence of an enemy's fleet being upon the coast. The storm increasing on the 24th, the fleet got under weigh taking up the bay, but they made little progress, the wind blowing hard at E.N.E.; on proceeding about two leagues they again cast anchor. On the evening of the 25th, a Lieutenant and eight men in a boat were driven on Bere island, who were made prisoners by the peasantry, and the officer sent off to Dublin. On the 26th and 27th the wind continued from the same quarter, and increased to a hurricane, and several of the vessels drifting their anchors, were compelled to cut their cabels and go out to sea. Their force being thus reduced, a council of war was held,

few days after forty tumbrils, laden with ammunition from Dublin, arrived in Belfast, and was lodged in the new barrack; and a proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and Council declared the parishes of Banagher, Boveagh, Baltagh, and Dungiven, county of Derry, under the insurrection act.

This hostile fleet having been happily dispersed by a tremendous storm from the east, which raged with incessant fury for above a week, those who anticipated the landing of their troops, the overthrow of the government, establishment of a republic, and the consequent advancement of themselves and their friends, suddenly changed their tone. They affirmed, that no French ships had been upon the coast, and the report was merely a trick of the British minister to discover if they would really fly to arms, in which device, it was triumphantly added, he had been disappointed. These falsehoods were likewise resounded in the *Northern Star*, from which paper, of the 12th January, 1797, is copied the following:—"The master of a vessel arrived in Dublin, declares, that he had been off Bantry bay during fourteen days last past, and never saw any part of the French squadron, which, with the help of good glasses, magnifying glasses to be sure, was so clearly discovered from the shore."

Notwithstanding the failure of this formidable expedition, the spring of the following year was marked by an unabated activity on the part of the *United Irishmen*, and, if possible, a still more rancorous hostility against those who failed to join

and on the evening of the 27th the remaining vessels left the bay. Soon after the frigate Fraternite, with the general and admiral on board, arrived, but learning the return of the fleet, they hastened to follow. However, on the 31st December, several of the enemy's ships were seen again at anchor in the bay, and on the same day some frigates passed higher up, and two armed boats put off from a seventy-four gun ship, and it was for a time supposed that a landing was intended, but no attempt of that kind was made, and the boats, after boarding an American vessel, returned to their ship. On the 4th January, 13 vessels remained in the bay, but on the morning of the 5th only two of seventy-four guns, two frigates, and a cutter were in sight, and they soon after stood down the bay, wind S.E. Mr. Tone states that this armament had on board, when it sailed, nearly 15,000 land forces, 7,000,000 musket cartridges, twenty-one field-pieces, nine battering cannons, 61,200 barrels of gunpowder, and 41,160 stand of small arms. On the 1st of January, 1797, they appeared at the mouth of the Shannon, where they detained a pilot boat, with a revenue officer, who had went off to reconnoitre. Two of these vessels anchored off Ray-head, and sent their boats out for provisions, all of which they paid for.—*Life of Theobald W. Tone; Hibernian Magazine; Theirs' History of the French Revolution; Two Months at Kilkee.*

their societies. The most slanderous tales were invented to blast their reputation, and they were commonly branded as Orangemen or informers—terms equally hateful. In many instances, these slanders terrified the accused to join their ranks; few persons, however, guarded they might be against the dagger of the assassin, having the hardihood to continue, as it were, outlawed by their relations, neighbours, and former friends, who, however amicably disposed, dared have no connection with them. At this time the number of societies of *United Irishmen* in Belfast amounted to eighty, or nearly 3000 persons.

On the 2nd of February, Arthur O'Connor, Esq., then a candidate for the representation of the county of Antrim, was arrested in Dublin, charged with publishing a seditious libel in his second address, "To those who were electors of the county of Antrim," dated January 28th, 1797, in which address he justified an alliance with France. The same day a king's messenger, accompanied by a military guard, seized all the books, papers, types, &c., in the office of the *Northern Star*, and placed a guard in it. Robert and William Simms, the only proprietors of that paper out of prison, were likewise arrested, and sent off to Dublin. The guard was withdrawn from the office on the 7th, and the *Northern Star* began to be published on the 20th of the same month.

About this time there began to be privately printed and circulated, at irregular intervals, a paper entitled, "*The Union Star.*" It was only printed on one side, and chiefly consisted of the names and abuse of persons hostile to the schemes of the *United Irishmen*, with exhortations to the people to rise and take vengeance upon their oppressors. Each number commenced thus:—"As the *Union Star* is an official paper, the managers promise the public that no characters shall be hazarded but such as are denounced by authority, as being the partners and creatures of Pitt, and his sanguinary journeyman Luttrell. The *Star* offers to public justice the following detestable traitors, as spies and perjured informers. Perhaps some one, more lucky than the rest, may reach his heart, and free the world from bondage." Then followed the lists of prescription, from one of which is copied the following:—

"William Bristow, sovereign of Belfast, by trade a minister of the Church of England. This infamous mountebank unites the cruelty of an inquisitor to all the chicanery of a vicious priest."

"Chichester Skeffington, high sheriff of the county of Antrim. This villain inherits all the vices of tyranny, as descendant of the first English settlers, robbers, and invaders; under the patronage of what is called the head of the church, to whom he looks for rewards for committing every atrocity that ever corruption and villany promoted."

Each number of this paper concluded with an exhortation to their friends. In No. 2, the people were called upon to "establish the empire of universal benevolence and fraternity from Wicklow hills to Belfast, from the channel to the Atlantic." In No. 3, it was said, "Though we are not advocates for assassination, we know, on the authority of history, that assassination preserved the liberties and rescued many of the ancient republics from the power of aspiring villains who raised themselves on the necks of the people, and on the ruins of liberty. It was a positive law in Corinth, Rome, Athens, Syracuse, &c., that any citizen was justified, and should be rewarded and honoured as the deliverer of his country, who would assassinate any villain aspiring to the sovereign power, or infringing upon the rights of the people." In No. 5, when treating of the virtue of assassination, it was said, "We appeal to thy noble and venerated name, O! Brutus, prince of patriotic assassins, who bravely assassinated the tyrant amidst his cohorts, and in the presence of his pensioned senate."

A proclamation was issued by the Lord Lieutenant and council offering a reward of £200, each, for the apprehension of persons concerned in writing, printing, and publishing this paper, but no discovery was made. It was commonly believed at the time to have been printed in Dublin, and it was "broadly insinuated" by the disaffected that it was published "by the connivance of the Irish government," and a part of the system "encouraged by the British cabinet" to vilify the Irish patriots. In a work entitled, Strictures on Plowden, it is stated to have been printed in Belfast, and oral record has named its editor and printer in that town. However, in a

work just published, it is affirmed that its editor and publisher was the notorious Walter Cox. Be this as it may, it appears evident that the publishers had correspondents in both places, as the persons pointed out to be murdered belong to each. This paper ceased to be published about December, 1797, having only had a temporary existence of about eight months.

On the 1st of March, a meeting of the magistrates of the county of Down was held at Saintfield, in order to deliberate upon the distracted state of that county. The Marquis of Downshire being called to the chair, he proceeded to advert to the several barbarous murders lately committed, particularly that of Mr. Cummins, near Comber, and he concluded by proposing, that the baronies of Ards and Castlereagh be placed under the insurrection act. He was followed in the same spirit of language by Lord Annesley, who moved, that instead of the baronies, the entire county should be substituted. This notion was supported by the Earl of Londonderry, and opposed by Messrs. Pottinger, Rankin, Crawford, and Gordon. The motion of Lord Annesley was, however, carried by a great majority, and the county was declared to be in a state of disturbance, or likely to become so, and a memorial was ordered to be forwarded to the Lord Lieutenant and council, to place it under the insurrection act. A few days after, eighteen persons from the neighbourhood of Saintfield were arrested and committed to the county prison, charged with "treasonable practices and house-racking."[1]

In the meantime, the general business of the country became, in a great degree, suspended, public credit being shaken to its foundation. So much so, indeed, that the governor and directors of the National bank in Dublin, refused to issue cash; and such was the common alarm, that during the forenoon of the 2nd of March, the commissioners of the revenue refused to receive National notes for the payment of duties.[m] At the same time, the utmost exertions were continued by the *United Irishmen* to take the field, in procuring lead, gunpowder, and arms. At Ballyclare, a large leaden statue of Neptune, that had stood for nearly a century on a pedestal in a mill-dam,

[1] Northern Star.

[m] Hibernian Magazine, March, 1797, p. 287.

was carried off at night, as was a cistern of the same metal, for the purpose of being cast into musket balls.

Early in March, the necessity of conciliation was brought forward in the House of Commons by Sir Lawrence Parsons, and parliamentary reform and Roman Catholic emancipation recommended as the most likely means to allay the general discontent that existed throughout the kingdom; but on a division of the house, only nineteen members voted in support of the motion.[n] About this time, the supporters of the *Northern Star* became highly exasperated at the interruption that had been given to the publication of that paper; in several parts of the counties of Down and Antrim, the carriers of the Belfast *News-Letter* were robbed, and their papers destroyed, and warned to discontinue that employment. In other districts, those persons forwarding the *Northren Star* suffered a similar annoyance.

Notwithstanding the strong measures adopted by the government, the progress of the disaffected continued to be marked by a succession of daring outrages. On the night of the 11th of March, a number of men, with their faces blackened, and otherwise disguised, forcibly entered the dwelling-houses of several persons in the town of Belfast, and carried of the arms which the inhabitants had for their protection. In consequence of many similar outrages, and other nightly depredations, on the 13th of March, a proclamation was issued from Belfast, signed G. Lake, Lieutenant General, commanding the northern district. It called upon the people to immediately surrender such arms and ammunition as were in their possession, and rewards were offered to those as should discover where the like were secreted. A few days after the appearance of this proclamation, a violent debate took place in the Irish House of Commons, regarding the order that had been issued for disarming the north. In the course of this debate, Mr. Grattan declared his decided disapprobation of the measures adopted by the government. He said, "that the officer who enforced the order to disarm the people was guilty of robbery, and that if carried into general execution, it was high treason—a levying war against the king." If the government of Ireland, said he,

[n] Parliamentary Debates.

"can issue such an order, and execute it, the government of Ireland is a despotism! If the House sit still, and with folded arms, see an English minister carry it into execution, the House is not the representatives of the Irish nation! they are voluntary slaves, and not an independent legislature! For himself, he would consent to see the north trampled upon. He did not defend their excesses—for excesses they had been guilty of—but those excesses he could not believe were so numerous as had been stated, or so enormous as to justify a declaration of military law against them." The Attorney General (Wolfe) "entreated gentlemen to give this important subject an impartial and serious discussion. He was the slave of no administration, nor had ever been, and whatsoever sentiments he uttered in that House were the sentiments which his heart avowed, and not the dictates of official situation. On the question before the House he was free to acknowledge that the measure which had been taken by government was a stretch of the prerogative beyond the law; but, at the same time, he declared it was a measure which met his most hearty concurrence, as being made indispensably necessary by the daring outrages, the robberies, and the assassinations which had been committed in that part of the country, and which the civil power had been found unable to restrain or punish. No man, he thought, could have a doubt in his mind whether that necessity existed, as it was a matter of most public notoriety, that for two years back, there had subsisted in that part of the country a conspiracy, not for reforming, but for absolutely oversetting the Constitution. It was a matter of equal notoriety, that the persons engaged in this conspiracy, had not been contented with poisoning the minds of the inhabitants of that province, but they had instituted 'directing and corresponding societies,' for the purpose of propagating their principles and doctrines through other parts of the kingdom; they had, in many instances, to murder and treason; and particularly had compelled numbers of his majesty's armed subjects, the yeomanry, to give up their arms." He concluded by observing, that as the civil power had been found incapable to reach the evil, it became necessary to adopt strong measures,

and a general disarming of the people was thought the most eligible. [o]

Though the measures of the government were persevered in, comparatively few arms were surrendered in consequence of General Lake's proclamation, nor were the parties of the military sent out in quest of the like more successful, while their numerous depredations inflamed the general discontent. During their search, the properties of persons were, in numerous instances, wantonly destroyed or carried off; trunks, chests, and the like, staved, while their owners stood by offering to unlock them; and torture was even inflicted to discover where arms were secreted. [p] If, as has been reported, these maraudings were for the purpose of goading the *United Irishmen* into a premature rebellion, the object was, in some degree attained, as a plan for a general rising of the north was digested at this time, but it was soon after given up. [q]

Early in April Lewins was again despatched to Paris, under the assumed name of Thompson, as the accredited agent of the Irish republic. At Frankfort, he had an interview with General Hoche, from which city he continued his original route. He was instructed to solicit not more than ten thousand troops, nor less than five, but to request an additional supply of arms, to make up for those taken from their friends in the north—and to endeavour to procure a few Irish officers who had been in foreign service, by offering them higher rank. [r] On the 10th of April a number of persons who had been for some time confined in the artillery barrack, Belfast, charged with treasonable or seditious practices, were put on board of a prison ship moored in Garmoyle.

Though arrests were continued of persons charged with offences against the state, the exertions of such friends as were still at large continued unabated. Their meetings, however, at times, were thwarted by informers, among whom J. Bird, alias Smyth, alias Johnston, Frederick Dutton, and Edward

[o] Parliamentary Debates.

[p] A blacksmith named Shaw was tortured on the picquet at Downpatrick, to extort a confession where pikes were secreted.

[q] Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, August 30th, 1798.

[r] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August 21, 1798; Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. II., p. 2.

J. Newell were, at this time, most notorious. The former ruffian was a member of the London corresponding society, and for some time passed himself off in Belfast as a personage. Dutton's labours were chiefly confined to the town and vicinity of Newry, where he acted in concert with the noted Major Wardle, dragging whoever they had the slightest suspicion of to the guard-house or prison. Newell was for some time a portrait painter in Belfast, and on his information, about half-past eight o'clock on the night of the 14th of April, Colonel Barber, with a party of the Reay Highland fencible regiment, surprised two committees of *United Irishmen*, consisting of twenty-one persons, in the house of John Alexander, Peter's-hill, Belfast. With these committees were taken a number of important papers, and also the papers of another society, the eightieth copies of these were afterwards published in the report of the secret committee of the House of Commons. By them it appeared, that on the 14th of April, 1797, the *United Irishmen* in the county of Antrim amounted to 22,726; cannon, 8; mortars, 1; guns, 2,228; bayonets, 1,748; pistols, 117; swords, 397; pikes, 4,888; ball-cartridges, 24,911; musket-balls, 90,943; gunpowder, pounds, 1,236; cash in hand, £693, 8s. 9½d. The number of *United Irishmen* in the county of Down was stated at 28,577; but the return of arms, stores, and cash in hand were not found. In the county of Derry the number of *United Irishmen* was rated at only 10,500; guns, 1,277; bayonets, 416; pikes, 1,230; pounds gunpowder, 1,319; ball-cartridges, 8,545; balls, 550; cash, £25, 4s. [s] In these papers it was recommended to the different societies to enter into voluntary subscriptions to equip those for the field who were unable to arm themselves. It was declared improper to hold any communication with persons not in society, and "that if any *United Irishman*, on a jury, was to find any prisoner charged with being a brother, guilty, they ought to lose their existence." On the breaking out of the revolution, the property of those known to be hostile was to be confiscated "to the national benefit," and no avowed enemy to be permitted to serve in their ranks. Magistrates to be

[s] For some cause we are unable to account, those numbers are underrated; for instance, their cannon were as follow:—Belfast, six six-pounders; Lisburn, two three-pounders; Ballymena, two six-pounders; Larne, two six-pounders.

appointed to act in concert with the revolutionary committees of the several districts. It also appeared, that the sums paid monthly by the inferior societies into the baronial committees, was only two shillings and eightpence halfpenny; which sum being too small to support the secret services of the union, was occasionally aided by voluntary subscriptions from the higher classes.

A few days after the arrest of these committees, a conspiracy was discovered in Carrickfergus to deliver that castle, then the principal depôt of military stores in the north, into the hands of the *United Irishmen*. At least twenty of the conspirators were soldiers belonging to the different corps then in garrison, three of whom deserted, one turned informer, and eight or nine were sent off to regiments on foreign service, a few were liberated, and several inhabitants charged with being concerned in the plot, fled, or were imprisoned. The greater number of the soldiers engaged in this affair belonged to the artillery, and, in furtherance of their scheme, they had extracted the gunpowder from a tumbril of six-pounder case shot, attached to some field pieces in their charge.

At the county of Antrim assizes, held in April, John Story, John and Alexander Gordon, and Joseph Cuthbert, inhabitants of Belfast, were indicted for a conspiracy to murder, and shooting at and wounding at Drumbridge, on the 8th of September, a man named John Lee. Only Cuthbert, however, was put upon his trial, against whom Lee swore positively to his being the person who fired the shot by which he was wounded, having passed him the moment before. On the part of the prisoner two witnesses were produced, who swore to their having been drinking with the prisoner in Belfast, at the very time sworn by Lee to have been wounded by him. The prisoner was acquitted, but before he and his colleagues left the dock, they were remanded to prison on a charge of high treason. In the evening they were visited by an old friend, when the events of the day became the subject of conversation, in the course of which Cuthbert acknowledged that the *alibi* was merely a judicious scheme of his attorney, for by G— he was the very man who winged Lee! A woman named Bell Martin had given a garbled account of this conspiracy,

which she stated to have overheard as she waited upon those persons in the upper room of a public-house in Sugar-house-entry, Belfast, where they, and a few others, met daily, under the name of the Muddler's-club. She also deposed, that a private soldier of the artillery was daily in attendance upon these persons, who, in fact, constituted the Belfast directory. The artillery soldiers were drawn out on parade, and Bell passed up and down their line in earnest review, but was unable to point out the supposed delinquent, which shook no little the confidence of her friends in her veracity. The fact was, the person sought did not belong to the army; he was an old volunteer wearing the uniform dress of his corps, blue, faced with red, and hence his dress had a great resemblance to that of the artillery. On this occasion Bell was brought from Dublin in the custody of a king's messenger, but she was not produced upon the trial. At the same assizes, several persons, confined for seditious pratices, were liberated without a trial, the informers having absconded, or denying what they had formerly sworn.

At Down assizes, a man named John Broom was found guilty of administering unlawful oaths to John Waring, a soldier in the artillery; and twelve persons were indicted for assembling at night, with many others, and firing into the house of Hugh M'Kee, near Saintfield. The prisoners were acquitted, and twenty-two others were liberated on giving bail, and about forty discharged. At the assizes held for the county of Derry, one man was found guilty of tendering illegal oaths, and sentenced to be transported, and three others charged with treasonable offences were acquitted. About the same time, Dr. Alex. Crawford, Lisburn; Rev. Sinclair Kelburne, Belfast; William M'Cracken, Jacob Nixon, Henry Spear, and others, from the same town, accused of offences against the state, were arrested, and sent off under an escort of dragoons to Dublin.

On the 15th of May, William Ponsonby, in the House of Commons, after a short prefatory speech, proposed his motion on the subject of reform, which he then read, and which included a reform in the national representation, and that all disabilities on account of religion be for ever abolished. This

was opposed by Secretary Pelham, who said, that the House ought not, at present, to enter into a discussion on those subjects, especially as they had been made the pretexts for treasonable practices, and he, therefore, moved a motion of adjournment, in which he was supported by M. Beresford, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Jepson, and others. The motion for adjournment was strenuously opposed by Mr. Stewart, of Killymoon, Mr. Fletcher, George Ponsonby, Sir John Freke, the Knight of Kerry, Sir William Smyth, Mr. Curran, and Mr. Grattan. Mr. Curran proceeded, at considerable length, to answer the objections that had been made to these measures, which he said had been "used in all times, in war, in peace, in quiet, in disturbance. Reform," he said, "had become an exception to the proverb that says, 'there is a time for all things,' but for reform there is no time, because at all times corruption is more profitable to its author than public virtue and prosperity, which they know must be fatal to their views; and that the objections to it were a compound of the most unblushing impudence and folly. It was said that reform was only a pretence, and that separation was the real object of leaders—if this be so," said he, "confound the leaders by destroying the pretext, and take the followers to yourselves. You say they are 100,000, I firmly believe there is three times that number." Mr. Grattan proceeded in the same strain, and with his usual eloquence, but on the question of adjournment being put, there appeared 170 members for it, and against it only 30. Upon this division, Mr. Grattan and the other leaders of the opposition, seceded from parliament.[t]

In the same month it was discovered, through the informer Newell, that a considerable number of the Monaghan regiment of militia, then quartered in Belfast, had been seduced from their allegiance, and taken the *United Irishmen's* oath. Several of these men were immediately arrested, and the regiment being drawn out in the square of the new barrack, 75 of them stepped forward and acknowledged to General Lake their having taken said oath, and professing their sorrow, were pardoned. Seventeen, however, of those who had been previously arrested, were put upon their trial before a general court-

[t] Parliamentary Debates.

martial, and four of them were found guilty of mutiny, a design to murder their officers, and to join the French on their landing in this kingdom. On the 16th of May, these prisoners were taken, under a strong guard, to the camp at Blaris, where the proceedings of the court-martial being read, they were sentenced to be shot, which sentence was immediately carried into effect. This act, says Mr. Teeling, in the sequel to his personal narrative, "was the first important blow which the national confederacy sustained."

These unfortunate men were kept buoyed up to their last hour with an assurance that they would be rescued, and dispositions were actually in progress for that purpose. Some days previous to their execution, the people of the adjacent country were warned to hold themselves in readiness, as on the rescue of the soldiers the revolution would commence. Agreeably to this plan, on the night of the 15th, a meeting was held in a house in North-street, Belfast, for the purpose of effecting the liberation of the prisoners, but these soon retired, the numbers who assembled being quite inadequate to accomplish their project.

Four days after the tragical scene at Blaris, a few serjeants and corporals of the Monaghan regiment, proceeded with an address and declaration of their loyalty to the office of the *Northern Star* for insertion in that paper. Its insertion was refused, unless they would consent to expunge the following paragraph reflecting upon the town:—"We entreat them (the public) to recollect our former good character, and as some palliation for our late disgrace, we have been a considerable time quartered in a town remarkable for its seditious practices."[u] On this refusal, the soldiers retired grumbling, but they soon returned, accompanied by a considerable number of the same regiment, and likewise of other corps, carrying sledges and other instruments of destruction, and proceeded to destroy or carry off all the effects in the office of the *Northern Star*. From this period that paper ceased to be published. At the following assizes for the county of Antrim, the proprietors of the *Northern Star* sought to recover damages for the destruction of their printing-office and property, by a number

[u] The Life and Confessions of Edward J. Newell.

of men in military dress. The damages were laid at £4,000, but on one witness being examined, their claim was found not to come within the statute.

This outrage proved merely the prelude to several similar depredations, or as such robberies were then called—rackings; and for weeks afterwards, Belfast seemed as given up to a licentious soldiery, whose destruction of private property appeared rather the acts of a savage mob, than those of an army levied for the support of good government, and the protection of the inhabitants.

According to public notice, about the same time, a numerous meeting of the freeholders of the county Antrim was held in the Linen-hall, Ballymena, the Hon. Chichester Skeffington, high sheriff, in the chair, Mr. Luke Teeling, secretary. The business of the day was opened by the chairman reading over the requisition presented to him to call the meeting, and stating, that as freeholders alone were called, he hoped no others would interfere.

The meeting was then addressed by Edward J. Agnew, Esq., one of the members in parliament for the county, who, in a brief speech, said,—he was particularly gratified in meeting so numerous and respectable a body of his constituents, and he proceeded to comment with severity on the executive government of the country, which he stigmatized as "profligate," in the extreme, having added greatly to the public burthens, and taken away more of the rights and privileges of the people than any other administeration had ever done before them. He concluded by proposing a petition to the crown, which was seconded by Dr. Alexander Halliday, Belfast. The petition being now read, James Agnew Farrel, Esq., in a speech, delivered with considerable vehemence, supported the prayer of the petition. He declared that measures of conciliation alone could only save the country. After a few short, and rather dull speeches, of a similar tendency, had been delivered, it was moved, that the petition be put paragraph by paragraph, which was accordingly done. During its reading, opposition was made, and amendments proposed—but these were afterwards withdrawn, or not seconded, and the petition, after some debate, agreed to, with only seven dissentients. It im-

plored his Majesty, "by that great covenant which binds the sovereign and the subject," not to shut his ears against the dangers of the empire, or the miseries of the people. They went on to say, that his Majesty's ministers had laboured to "destroy the third estate of the legislature, and the government to an arbitrary despotism," and the "right of being free from arbitrary arrests and imprisonments," while a licentious military force had been let loose upon the country. That the people were put out of the protection of the peace, by which numbers had been banished without even the form of a trial, or crowded into dungeons, "and this only, because they had dared to unite together in the vindication of common right." They concluded by preferring their complaint against his Majesty's "wicked and unprincipled ministers," and praying him to dismiss them from his presence and councils for ever. The chairman was instructed to transmit a copy of this petition to the Earl of Moira and the right Hon. Charles J. Fox—they to present the same to his Majesty. [v]

This meeting having passed over highly to the satisfaction of the *United Irishmen*, immediately after, efforts were made to get up a similar one in Down. The high sheriff, Thomas Waring, however, refused to call a meeting of the freeholders, on which a notice appeared in the public papers, signed by the protestant bishop of Down and Connor, and thirty magistrates and freeholders, calling upon the freeholders to assemble in Downpatrick, to deliberate upon the alarming state of public affairs. In the interim it was confidentially reported, that it was intended to disperse this meeting by the military, on which printed handbills were circulated, signed by sixteen magistrates, cautioning the freeholders not to assemble at Downpatrick. Nevertheless, on the day previous to that which had been appointed, 25 of the persons who had signed the requisition, met in Ballinahinch, Arthur Johnston, chairman, Eldred Pottinger, secretary. These persons afterwards published an address, in which they regretted the refusal of the sheriff to call a meeting, as they had, "a perfect reliance on the peaceable and orderly conduct of the freeholders." After some brief remarks regarding their staunch loyalty, and

[v] Belfast News-Letter.

the rectitude of their intentions, they concluded by saying: "And we do hereby pledge ourselves to the country, to take the most effectual measures in our power of collecting the sentiments of the freeholders, and conveying them to his Majesty. We do farther declare, that we will not relax in our exertions, by every legal and constitutional means, to obtain a full, fair, and adequate representation of the people of Ireland in parliament, without regard to difference of religious opinions; and that we are fully convinced that the plan of reform lately laid before parliament, if acceded to, would effectually satisfy the public mind, and restore peace and tranquility to the nation." They afterwards forwarded a petition to his Majesty, signed by 4,803 freeholders, which was presented to him by Charles J. Fox, in which petition it was complained, among a list of grievances, that "the right of bearing arms had been grossly violated, not only by a series of laws repugnant to the written and acknowledged compact between the crown and the people, expressed unequivocally in the bill of rights, but in a late instance, by an act of state, avowedly illegal." They concluded by entreating his Majesty to dismiss his present ministers from his councils, and to call to his councils such men as would assist the people in obtaining a reform in parliament, embracing every religious persuasion.

The high respectability of the greater number of those who attended these meetings, and their attachment to the principles of the constitution, rendered them above even suspicion of their being engaged in revolutionary schemes. Yet, from their liberal use of the phraseology of the disaffected, it would seem that they had either, for a time, been deceived by their specious language, or feared to deviate from it, though, for years previous, it had been notorious, that if ever for a moment reform had been contemplated, it had long since repined into rebellion.[w] It is nevertheless certain, that for some time previous, many of the higher classes had become seriously alarmed at the progress of the *United Irishmen*—and though compara-

[w] An intimate friend of the writer, who, from the formation of a united society in his neighbourhood, to their last meeting, held office in their civil and military organization, assures him that he never even heard Roman catholic emancipation or parliamentary reform mentioned in their meetings —their object, at all times, being a separation from Great Britain, and the establishment of a republic as in France.

tively few of these had, as yet, joined their ranks, a sudden fear had spread over the country, that, as in France, from law breakers they might become law makers. Hence they deemed it expedient to seem friendly disposed, or at least passive, as the pistol or dagger had denounced the danger of an active opposition. It is equally certain, that about this time some cautious persons took an oath of secrecy, that is, not to disclose what they heard or saw passing towards the meditated revolution; and that a few wealthy confidential friends, who objected to oaths, were even admitted into society, without their having taken any test or obligation whatever! [x]

For some months previous to the time of which we have been treating, *Defenderism* had been making rapid progress in the county of Antrim, an active agent named Stanley, from Armagh, being deputed on this special service. In their oath, taken on admission, they were called loyalists, and the obligation contained no direct expressions against the crown, while the better to mask their intentions, there was introduced a clause to be true to the king while under his government!

About this time, a proclamation was issued by the government, offering pardon, with a few exceptions, to those who had been guilty "of outrage and rebellion," and should surrender themselves within one month, and give security for their future good behaviour. This proclamation failed of producing any useful effect, as few, however disposed, dared to come forward in the manner prescribed, and the few who did so, were pointed out as objects of derision by their neighbours. The warlike preparations of the disaffected were hence continued unabated, and at Belfast, two persons caught in the act of forging pike-heads, were paraded through that town with the pikes on a rope about their necks, and they were afterwards put on board of a tender.

By the beginning of June, a special commission was issued, as it was expressed, for the trial of such state prisoners as were confined in the jail of the county of Antrim; and on the

[x] The common fear and alarm which now prevailed, is strickingly evident from the following fact:—The petition to the high sheriff of Down, to call a meeting of the freeholders, was signed by several magistrates who had formerly memorialized the Lord Lieutenant and Council to proclaim the county under the insurrection act!—*Speech of the Earl of Clare, in the House of Lords, February* 19, 1798.

8th of that month, two judges of assize arrived in Carrickfergus, as was believed, for that purpose. The following day was spent in opening their court and in arraigning the prisoners, all of whom, except two, declared that they were ready to take their trial. No trials, however, were proceeded with, and their lordships, after administering the oath of allegiance to a considerable number of persons, adjourned their court to Belfast, where many persons also took said oath.

For some weeks after, the magistrates throughout the county of Antrim were busied in administering the oath of allegiance to those persons who presented themselves for that purpose, who, on taking the oath, usually received a certificate to that effect. To some, the taking this oath proved a seasonable pretext for withdrawing from the societies of *United Irishmen*, and, perhaps, from an office they were anxious for an excuse to get rid of. By the greater number, however, it was merely taken as a protection against their commital to the military guard-house, the tender's hold, or the county prison. At Ballycastle, 832 persons took this oath, accompanied by a surrender of a considerable number of arms, among which were 134 pikes, the only ones, we believe, voluntarily given up in the country! At this time, the number of *United Irishmen* enrolled in Ulster, was rated at 150,000. [y]

Notwithstanding the general swearing of allegiance, many of the disaffected continued unabated in their warlike preparations, and hence arrests were continued of persons charged with offences against the state; the principal of these were Rev. Samuel Barber, Rathfriland; David Armstrong, Ballinahinch; John Birnie, Saintfield; Rev. Sinclair Kelburne, Belfast; Rev. William Stavely, Knockbracken; and Thomas Huston, surgeon, Belfast. In searching the drawing-room of the latter gentleman, a sliding board was discovered in the floor, on removing which, many constitutions of *United Irishmen*, and political pamphlets, were found. [z]

Though the search for, or surrender of arms, under General Lake's proclamation, had weakened the means of the *United*

[y] Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, August 7, 1798.

[z] The charge against Mr. Stavely was his being a general officer in the army of the *United Irishmen*.—*M. S.*

Irishmen, in numerous instances they had eluded the intentions of the military, and retained their arms, while those carried off were in a great measure replaced by pikes, and hence a rising in the north continued to be seriously contemplated as at hand. In furtherance of this plan, some Irish officers, who had been in the Austrian service, arrived in Dublin to assist in the revolution, and two of these, Colonel James Plunkett and his nephew Captain O'Gorman, were now despatched on a tour of observation. On the evening of the 16th of June, they reached Hillsborough, where, by appointment, they met Messrs. Hughes and M'Cabe from Belfast. The evening passed in social hilarity—several improvements on the meditated rising were suggested—and on the following morning the party walked out by different routes, for the purpose of examining the defensive state of the camp at Blaris.

At dinner much conversation took place regarding the strength of the encampment, which all, except the colonel, pronounced as very strong and difficult to be assailed. "As the first step towards its reduction," said the colonel, "I would seize the cannon that I see here so slenderly guarded. These secured, I would soon clear the ground. The river and canal, on which you lay so much strength, would prove but a slender defence against a well directed fire of round shot. I would soon render the post untenable." The projected capture of the camp occupied the attention of the company till a late hour. In the morning they were much surprised on seeing the military busied in removing the cannon and stores from Hillsborough into the camp. This, for a moment, excited a suspicion that their conversation had been overheard, or that a traitor was in company, but the former was declared by all impossible, and they were all honourable men—the removal of the cannon was therefore deemed accidental, and the conversation soon took another turn.

In the evening the colonel, accompanied by his Belfast friends, continued his route by the way of Crumlin, where they had an interview with Mr. James Dickey, jun. After some conversation regarding the prosperous state of their affairs, and the patriotic feelings of the north, on the suggestion of Dickey it was agreed that the colonel and his suit should pass the

night at Crumlin. That Dickey should assemble as many as possible of his regiment, in order that the company might witness the excellent state of their discipline, and the progress made by their commander in the evolutions of the field.

Agreeably to this arrangement, the clouds of evening had scarcely thickened in the grey west, when Dickey, accompanied by his friends, passed into an adjoining field where some 160 men were assembled, each armed with a pike or musket. The winds were hushed as if listening to the warlike dispositions going forward. Not a leaf rustled in the hedgerows, or trembled on the branches of the tallest trees, and the silence was only broken by the footsteps of some stragglers as they fell into the rank, or the harsh call of the corn-creak in the fields.

The corps had been told off into grand and sub-divisions, and their ranks dressed, when Dickey advanced in front for the purpose of putting them through a few movements, in which he deemed them most expert. The word "attention" had just been given, when the quick pace of horses was heard in the distance, and a deep hum passed along the line, "its the Antrim dragoons." "Steady," now repeated by their commander, only served to increase the confusion; a few men were seen to fall out in the rear; the next moment they appeared to reel from centre to flanks, and soon spread over the field. Dickey used every effort in his power to restore order, he stormed, swore, collared some, knocked down others, and snatching a pike from one of the runaways, he compelled a few to turn back, but running in pursuit of other fugitives, those taken again fled, and at length all attempt to restrain their flight was given up.

The colonel retired highly disgusted with the scene he had just witnessed, while Dickey followed, overwhelmed with confusion. At length he so far recovered as to offer some apology for the strange panic that had seized his men, by the relation of similar cases, which, he said, had occurred to veteran troops.[a]

On the succeeding morning the colonel and his friends continued their journey to Randalstown, where a meeting of the

[a] The alarm was occasioned by a few persons trotting briskly home from Broughshane fair.

provincial committee was to be held to receive the report of the county of Antrim colonels, who were to assemble upon that day at Parkgate, on the important question of peace or war.

Among the representatives of Ulster, met on this interesting occasion at Randalstown, were Bartholomew Teeling, Dundalk; Robert Moore, city of Derry; John Hughes, Belfast; Thomas M'Cabe, of the same; William Dunn, Larne; Alexander Lowry, Linen-hill, near Rathfriland; and the Rev. Arthur M'Mahon, Holywood. The latter was also a member of, and delegate from the national executive or directory. Dunn and M'Mahon did not arrive for some time after the others, having been detained at Parkgate to receive the final decision of the colonels there met. [b] On proceeding to business, the report of the colonels was read by Dunn, in which they declared, in the most solemn and implicit terms, that they deemed it imprudent that a rising should take place without foreign aid. Yet if their brethren in Down persisted in that enterprise, and would not put it off, they of Antrim would assist them with nine or ten thousand men. The remainder of the report was of little interest, and it was affirmed that the meeting at Parkgate broke up much dissatisfied in consequence of their division, several being warm in support of the measures proposed by those of Down. M'Mahon further stated, that on the previous day he had attended a meeting of the Down colonels in Saintfield, and that he was instructed to inform those of Antrim, they were ready to take the field. [c] To this intelligence little attention was paid, and after some desultory conversation the meeting broke up as discontented as those at Parkgate; and Messrs. Lowry, Tennant, and Teeling, seeing their schemes frustrated, and alarmed lest they should be arrested, retired to Hamburgh,

[b] The Rev. Arthur M'Mahon was a probationer of the Presbytery of Antrim, and was long in the pay of the French government. In 1804, we find Marshal Berthier recommending to Bernedotte two Irishmen, then in Hamburgh, as spies. One of these was named Durnin, and the other M'Mahon; but it being discovered that the latter person had rendered himself more serviceable to England than to France, he was not employed by Bernedotte.—*Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August* 21*st*, 1798.—*Bourrienne's Memoirs of Bonaparte*, vol. II., pp. 295–6.

[c] Ibid.

while Robert R. Reid, Hastings, Mason, and M'Mahon, took a boat at Bangor, and passed over to Scotland. [d]

In Down, nevertheless, some of their leaders appear to have continued disposed to take the field, and on the 22nd of June, a partial rising of about twelve or fourteen hundred men took place near Kirkeel but "the men of Mourne," soon dispersed on learning that a body of dragoons was advancing upon them from Dromore. It has also been stated, that their leader, upon this occasion, was John Maginnis, and that the dragoons pursued him for some miles across the country, but were unable to come up with him. [e]

These combination of unfavourable circumstances appear to have produced a general apathy in the ranks of the *United Irishmen*, as at the next meeting of the provincial committee, only four counties, viz. :—Antrim, Down, Tyrone, and Donegall, were represented. In a great degree the common ferment also subsided. Many of the inferior societies throughout the country even ceased to meet, so that it required all the zeal and address of their leaders to keep the union alive. At one time serious fears were entertained, that notwithstanding the frequent cajolings and mutual expressions of "brotherly love," that the Roman Catholics and Dissenters would become separate parties; and some of the Presbyterian leaders in Down and Antrim were reported anxious to inculcate the notion that they could dispense with Catholic aid. [f]

About the beginning of July, Dr. William J. M'Nevin, a member of the national executive, and secretary to that body, was despatched to Paris, with some instructions which they had overlooked, or unable to give, at the departure of Lewins. Among other matters, he was to urge the promised succours, but the number of troops sought were lessened, as, from the aggrandizing policy of France upon the Continent, they feared the effect of a foreign army competent to keep possession of the country; or, to use the words of one of their most zealous friends—the Irish directory desired, "just sufficient to liberate

[d] Ibid.—Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. II., p. 3.

[e] Musgrave's History of the Rebellion. The writer has also heard this rising mentioned in a song.

[f] Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, August 30th, 1798. —Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. II., p. 6.

their country, but incompetent to subdue it." [g] He was likewise to endeavour to negotiate a loan of half a million of money in France, or, if the sum could not be procured there, to address himself to the court of Spain, and to assure the French government that the expense of fitting out the armament would be cheerfully repaid as soon as the Irish republic was established. [h] On the 1st of July, James Burnside, and other state prisoners from Belfast, confined in Dublin, were brought into the court of King's Bench, when their indictments for high treason being read, their trials were appointed for next term.

On 12th July, the Orangemen made a formidable display of their numbers in Belfast, amounting, by common estimation, to upwards of 6,000, but a considerable number of these were in military or yeomanry uniform. General Lake, commanding the northern district, accompanied by his staff, passed along their line as if in review, after which he proceeded to Lurgan where upwards of 100 lodges were met. The lodges in Belfast afterwards walked through the principal streets of the town, bearing orange flags, and accompanied by martial music playing the "Prussian Drum" or "Boyne Water." Perhaps no trait on record so fully displays the distraction of these times as the following: among those who walked in this procession wearing orange cockades and toasting the glorious and immortal memory of William III., and who, from their dress, might well have been supposed loyal, were several *United Irishmen!* who, only a few weeks before, had been engaged in treasons of the deepest dye!

Early in August a despatch was received by the national directory from Lewins, announcing that the expedition fitting out in Holland at the Texel was destined for this kingdom. [i] From the journal of Mr. Tone it appears that he, Alexander Lowry, Linen-hill, and John Tennant, Belfast, were, on the 5th of August, on board of the admiral's ship the Vryheid. He also states that the troops, amounting to 13,544 men, were embarked, and that the expedition consisted of fifteen sail of the line, ten frigates, and twenty-seven transports, and only

[g] A brief statement, by Samuel Neilson, printed at Newgate, 1802.

[h] Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, August 30th, 1798.

[i] Ibid.

waited a fair wind to put to sea. About the same time a considerable quantity of arms that had been seized or surrendered in the counties of Down and Antrim, were brought into Belfast, and several state prisoners confined in the barrack of that town were liberated on taking the oath of allegiance and giving bail.

The auspicious tidings regarding the expedition at the Texel afterwards became damped, in consequence of its not arriving as soon as had been expected. During the months of August and September, the intentions of the Dutch admiral to leave the port were baffled by light or contrary winds, and the season becoming rough and far advanced, it was feared that the expedition was given up. Their friends becoming impatient at this delay, and the provincial directory being accused of not being sufficiently on the alert, a few spirited men in Belfast subscribed 500 guineas to send a messenger to France, to hasten the sailing of the Dutch fleet.[j] The deep wailings of the north, in consequence of this delay, are thus pathetically described by a late author:—"The expedition of the Dutch comprised the entire disposable force of the Batavian republic, and was officially announced to the *United Irishmen*, and the country prepared for its immediate reception; and never did the public mind appear more deeply interested, impatiently waiting its issue. Many a longing eye was directed to the coast, but, alas! the winds a second time frustrated an invasion, and for upwards of two months, every attempt of the fleet to put to sea proved abortive."[k] During this suspense, Dr. M'Nevin arrived in Dublin, from Paris, and made the report of his mission to the directory, in which they were assured, that they might, with confidence, continue to rely on the promised support of the French republic.[l] From the silence

[j] John Tennant afterwards became an officer in the French army, and fell at the battle of Leipzic, fought October 13, 1813.—Alexander Lowry, in 1792, was captain of the Ballyroney volunteers, and a companion of Theobald W. Tone. On the Irish expeditions being given up by the French government, he went to America. About 1806, through the interest of Lord Castlereagh, he obtained leave to return home. The vessel in which he had taken his passage being drove into a port in Norway, he there married a young lady, who he brought with him to Ireland, where he died a few years after.

[k] Sequel to Teeling's Personal Narrative, p. 13.

[l] Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, August 30, 1798.

observed regarding a money loan, it would seem that he had been unable to obtain any.

In September, at the assizes held for the county of Antrim, William Orr, a respectable farmer from the neighbourhood of Antrim, was found guilty of administering the oath of an *United Irishman* to James Wheatly and John Lindsay, soldiers in the Fifeshire fencible regiment. By the insurrection act, under which he was tried, this offence had been made felony, and from the extreme severity of his sentence, great interest was made to have it commuted, but though three times respited, he was executed on the 14th of October. Few persons from the country were present on this melancholy occasion, but a considerable military force, with four pieces of cannon, were under arms. At the place of execution, he distributed a printed paper, wherein he declared his innocence of the crime of felony, and concluded by hoping that his "virtuous countrymen," would bear him "in their kind remembrance, and continue faithful to each other," as he had "been to all of them." The colour of his coat at the time he suffered became a kind of uniform dress with many, and finger rings were worn, on which were engraved inside, or wrought with silk or hair, "remember Orr."[m]

At Down assizes, the Rev. Thomas L. Birch was indicted for some seditious expressions, said to have been uttered by him; he was acquitted. A considerable number of prisoners charged with seditious practices, or minor offences against the state, were put upon their trial, a few of whom were found guilty. Armagh assizes presented the singular spectacle of Captain J. St. Ledger, of the 24th dragoons, being found guilty of having taken the oath of an *United Irishman*, and of having administered the oath to his troop. He was transported!

Contrary to common expectation, the troops on board of the fleet at the Texel were disembarked, and the admiral ordered out to fight the English. No sooner had they put to sea, than

[m] The seduction of the army had been early a primary object with the *United Irishmen*, having succeeded so well in France, where the French guards, amounting to 3,600 men, were completely corrupted by the populace. —*Thiers' history of the French Revolution*, vol. I., p. 52.—The seduction of Wheatly and Lindsay, who were two ruffians, was accidentally discovered by the seizure of some seditious papers in the city of Derry, wherein these persons were mentioned as being up—a cant phrase for their having taken the oath of an *United Irishman*.

Admiral Duncan had notice, and on the 11th of October they were attacked, drawn up in line upon their own coast, the land being only about five miles distant. The action lasted nearly two hours and a half, and was gallantly contested by the Dutch admiral, who, nevertheless, was compelled to surrender. The result of this memorable action is well known, and it effectually settled the hopes of the disaffected as to aid from that quarter.[n] A subscription was entered into for the relief of the widows and orphans of the seamen who fell in this action on board Admiral Duncan's fleet. The several subscriptions in the county of Antrim amounted to £704, 8s. 5d.

Though the *United Irishmen* were again interrupted in their favourite project of invasion, they did not abandon themselves to despair, nor relax in their endeavours, but, with assiduity, continued their exertions as if nothing unfortunate to their interests had taken place. Their frequent drillings in barns were, therefore, continued under the direction of deserters from the army, but their evolutions were performed by moonlight, on heaths, or in fields at a distance from the public roads. On these occasions sham battles were fought, in which the column called the French army were always victorious. The charges with the pike were made at a brisk trot.

On the 8th of November, the state prisoners from Belfast, who had been arraigned in Dublin on the previous July, were again brought into Court, and their trials again put off at the instance of the crown. A few days after, several of these prisoners were liberated on giving bail. On the 14th of the above month, a provincial meeting was held in Armagh. Returns formerly ordered of the number of military in the different counties of Ulster were here presented. In the county of Antrim was 4,000, 700 of whom were reported friends; in county of Down were 1,100, of whom 1,000 were rated friendly to their cause.[o] About a fortnight after, Robert Simms was chosen by the Belfast directory, (then, it would appear, composed of the

[n] The Dutch fleet consisted of 26 sail, including frigates, under the orders of Admiral de Wintar, carried 1,266 guns, and 8,682 men; the British fleet consisted of 15 sail of the line, exclusive of frigates, and carried 1,134 guns, and 8.815 men. Eleven of the Dutch ships were taken, with three admirals. The British loss in killed and wounded was 751; the enemy's loss was not exactly known.

[o] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August 21, 1798.

following persons: Wm. Tennant, Robert Hunter, Clotworthy Birnie, John Coulter,) general and commander-in-chief of the County of Antrim, and about the same time an executive committee was established in each of the four provinces; the national directory, however, continued to sit in Dublin.[p]

December 7th. Rejoicings took place in the town of Ballinahinch, to celebrate, as was given out, their patriotic landlord's (Earl of Moira) birth-day. The good citizens of that town appear to have also had other objects in view, as during their hilarity the military on duty were made drunk, and the ammunition in charge of the detachment was carried off.[q]

1798. This eventful year commenced with all the usual sources of discontent, agitation, and alarm, which had so luxuriantly been fermenting the two preceding years. On the 3rd of January, the prisoners, eighty-seven in number, on board the ship moored in Garmoyle, endeavoured to regain their liberty. Their watchword was "Blood, blood!" and in the scuffle that ensued, two of the officers of the ship were wounded, and six of the guard, and one of the prisoners leaping overboard was shot in the water, and several were so badly wounded that they were sent on shore to an hospital. The attempt was chiefly frustrated by the hurry of those in the press-room to mount the ladder to get upon the deck, as by their weight the ropes by which it was suspended were broken. At a meeting in Armagh, on the 14th, of twelve provincial delegates, it was announced that a messenger had arrived from Paris with intelligence that the French government were determined to invade the three kingdoms at the same time, and that on no account would they desert the interests of Ireland. They were also informed, that in order to keep up a regular communication between the countries, eleven Irish delegates then passed between Paris and Hamburgh.[r]

At this period the growing ferment was greatly heightened by 163 of the most respectable freeholders of the county of Antrim being summoned to Dublin, to serve as jurors on the trials of the state prisoners from that county, given out as

[p] Belfast News-Letter, August 10, 1798.

[q] Speech of the Earl of Clare in the House of Lords, February 19, 1798.

[r] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, Aug., 21, 1798.

about to take place. On the 24th of January, the prisoners were brought into court, when a list of the freeholders summoned was produced by Mr. Curran, counsel for the prisoners, on which list was marked their several political characters. The first eighty names were marked good, the next nineteen timid, and the remainder stated, "bad in every sense of the word." Mr. Curran proceeded to challenge the array of the panel, as not being duly and impartially returned by the high sheriff. The court then ordered the fact of partiality to be tried before two freeholders of the county there present, Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Joy, and it was mutually agreed by the respective counsels, that they should be sworn to try the fact, and they were accordingly sworn. General L. Barber, who had been summoned on the part of the prisoners, being sworn, acknowledged that he had seen a "list of names with a gentleman in Belfast," and was told by the person who showed him the list, that a number in it, "to the number of about 140, were of a very extraordinary character, by which he understood was meant that they were disaffected. The person who showed him the list, he believed, had been engaged in some office connected with the sheriff's department," and that his name was Moore. The sub-sheriff of the county of Antrim was now called in support of the challenge, but he did not appear. The court then proceeded to recapitulate to the triers the evidence, and expressed their opinion on it, that it did not support the challenge, and the triers gave their verdict "for the array, and against the challenge." The trials of Burnside and Barrett, were then proceeded with, who were acquitted, there being no prosecution, and S. Kennedy, and a few others were immediately liberated, John Bird, *alias* Smith, *alias* Johnston, the informer, having taken flight from Dublin two days before. The trials of others were put off by affidavit, "that Henry Joy M'Cracken, a material witness, was seriously indisposed in Belfast, without whose evidence they could not, with safety to their lives, put themselves on trial." [s] Newell, the informer, a few days previous, had made his peace with the prisoners from Belfast, during a visit to Kilmainham prison; and deserting the service of the government, about the 20th of February, in

[s] In the Life of Newell, he says, that some of these names were marked by General Barber and himself.—*Belfast News-Letter*, January 29, 1798.

company of Robert Orr, chandler, and a few other old friends, he again made his way to the north.[t]

February 1. The Ulster committee, or directory, met at M'Clean's, Shane's castle—nine members present. A messenger from Dublin gave a long detail of the success that they had obtained over the government on the late trials. He said, by h——s he would now speak his mind freely, for he was not afraid, as delivery was now certain. They were also informed, that their friend priest Quigley had lately returned from France, who confirmed the intelligence regarding the progress made in fitting out the expedition, which, they were assured, would be ready by the end of April, or early in May. It was likewise stated that priest Quigley and the Rev. Arthur M'Mahon had opened a communication with the United Britons, a matter deemed of great importance. But what was still more flattering, that delegates from that august body had arrived to the national directory, whose address was laid before the meeting, and that already legislators were appointed for the three kingdoms, to act as an executive for the whole. The members were instructed to cause their men to hold themselves in readiness, and to make out lists of their enemies, and their places of abode. By a return of the 25th of this month, it appears that the number of armed *United Irishmen* in Ulster was 110,990, and in the kingdom about treble that number.[u]

At this period, the exertions of the disaffected in the northern counties of Ulster, were such as to call forth the warmest encomiums from the national executive. On their meeting of the 27th of February, it was decreed, that the patriots of these counties deserved well of their country, "for the many offers of emancipating her directly, but that they be requested to bear the shackles of tyranny a little longer, until the whole kingdom be in such a state of organization, as will,

[t] About two months after, he was again suspected of becoming informer, on which he was consigned to Moiley, who, to use the language of that day, eat him!—*Life and Confessions of Edward J. Newell.*

[u] Mr. Tone, in his journal of the above date, mentions the following Irish refugees being in Paris:—James N. Tandy, Edward J. Lewins, Alexander Lowry, John Tennant, Bartholomew Teeling, Arthur M'Mahon, Joseph Orr, Anthony M'Cann, Francis Burgess, —— M'Kenna, —— Maguire, John Cormic, Richard Cormic, —— M'Sheechy, —— Duckett, Wm. Hamilton, and Mathew Tone.—*Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons*, August 21, 1798.

by their joint co-operation, effect, without loss, that desirable object which they stated as drawing to a crisis." [v] Upon the same day, the provincial committee again assembled in Armagh, to whom it was announced that a delegate had just arrived from France to hasten the complete organization of the people, as the French directory had assured him the expedition would be ready to sail by the beginning of May. That the national executive had honoured a draft of £500, for the use of the delegates, which sum they intended to levy off the different provinces—that in Ulster by a voluntary loan. The want of money was greatly complained of, and the lottery for raising money could not yet be drawn, 600 of the tickets remaining unsold. [w] On the 28th of this month, Arthur O'Connor, *alias* Colonel Morris, which name he had for a time assumed; James J. Quigley, *alias* O'Coighley, *alias* Priest Quigley, *alias* Captain Jones, *alias* James John Fevey; Mr. Williams, *alias* John Binns, an active member of the London corresponding society; John Allen, who passed for a servant of Mr. O'Connor, and Jeremiah Leer, really servant to that gentleman—were arrested at Margate, on the point of embarking for France, as was believed, to accelerate the meditated invasion of these kingdoms. In a pocket-book found in a great coat pocket, hanging up in a room where Quigley was at breakfast, was discovered a paper purporting to be an address, "From the secret committee of England to the executive directory of France." Among other expressions in this paper, it was declared, that "with the tyranny of England, that of Europe must fall;"—and it was added, "Haste, then, great nation, pour forth thy gigantic force; let those base despots feel their avenging stroke; and let our oppressed nation call forth the praises of France at the altar of liberty." In the baggage of the party, was also found, "papers expressive of their being a sort of ambassadors from the *United Irishmen* to the directory at Paris," but they denied that any of the baggage was theirs. [x]

[v] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, Aug. 21, 1798.

[w] From the same authority, it appears that this lottery consisted of 2000 tickets, at one guinea each; that John Callwell, Belfast, was treasurer, and that the profits were to be applied, "to the general system of *United Irishmen*."—*Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons*, Aug. 21, 1798.

[x] On the arrest of Mr. O'Connor, the avowed editor of the *Press* newspaper, published in Dublin, the materials and papers of that establishment

On the 28th of February, General Sir Ralph Abercromby, commander-in-chief, addressed a letter to the military commanders thoughout the kingdom, in reprobation of the irregularities committed by the troops; but this remonstrance failing of producing any effect, a few weeks after he made a resignation of his office, in which he said, that the Irish army "had become contemptible to its enemies, and formidable only to its friends."

On the 12th of March, through the information of Thomas Reynolds, of Kilkea castle, county Kildare, a colonel in the united army, 14 delegates, composing the Leinster committee, with their papers, were seized by Mr. Swan, a magistrate, in the house of Mr. Oliver Bond, Bride-street, Dublin; and on the same day, Mr. Bond, Thomas A. Emmet, William J. M'Nevin, John Sweetman, Henry and Hugh Jackson, were arrested; and warrants were issued for the apprehension of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Richard M'Cormic, and William Sampson; the latter was soon after taken at Carlisle.[y] By this disaster the affairs of the disaffected in the capital were thrown into some confusion, and, in order to prevent a despondency, a few days after, a handbill was circulated in Dublin, in which were announced the safety of the arrested, a ten-fold activity in the leaders, and a perfect organization of the city, with a caution against precipitate measures.

March 25. The Ulster committee met at the house of Samuel Graves, Moy, but an alarm being given, they adjourned to Blackwatertown, where being again alarmed by the appearance of some dragoons, they retired to Armagh, where they concluded the business of the day. Among the business transacted on this occasion, was the appointment of a revolutionary staff and adjutant-generals, to transmit to the national execu-

were, by an order of the government, carried off. The first number of this newspaper was published September 28, 1797, on the plan of the "*Northern Star*, whose successor and emulator," it professed to be; the last number was dated March 13, 1798. Its most inflammatory papers were afterwards published, and entitled, "*Extracts from the Press.*" There was also another edition called, "*The Beauties of the Press.*" On the 24th of March, the papers and materials of a seditious newspaper, printed in Cork, entitled, "*The Harp of Erin,*" were also carried of by the sheriffs of that city.—*Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. II., p. 17.—*Trial of Arthur O'Connor.*

[y] Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. II., p. 17.—Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August, 21, 1798.

tive the state of their respective corps. At this meeting, a delegate from the Leinster committee reported that they had completely recovered the late severe shock, and in four days after their friends were taken, they had the whole province in a perfect state of organization. That a friend had arrived from France, with the glad intelligence, that the French were to commence the embarkation of their troops on the 1st of April. The next meeting of the committee to be held in Belfast on that day. [z]

On the committee again assembling, the persons names were reported whom the national executive had selected from the lists furnished to them of those qualified for the office of adjutant-general, but only those of four counties were returned, the others not having forwarded their lists. In the evening a delegate, who had been despatched to Dublin some days previous, arrived and joined the company. He said that the Leinster committee had received a letter from Bartholomew Teeling, then in Paris, stating that the French troops would certainly be on board by the middle of April; the Brest fleet, he said, was destined for Ireland, and would use every stratagem to avoid that of the British, whose fleet would probably be thus drawn off their own coast, while the troops embarked at the other ports would make a descent upon England. He farther stated, that there were fourteen persons from the north in Dublin, "supposed the most active men in the kingdom," and that Samuel Neilson, in particular, "was riding about night and day organizing the people." That it was the determination of the executive, in case of the French expedition being again frustrated, to make a rising themselves, as the citizens of Dublin, with the assistance of their friends in the army could secure the capital at any moment. [a] This statement was probably true, as to such lengths had the seduction of the army proceeded, that early in May we find surgeon Lawless holding a conference in Dublin on the subject of a rising, with delegates from almost all the militia regiments in Ireland.

[z] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, Aug. 12, 1879.

[a] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August 21, 1798.—Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. II., p. 76.

The reports of the fulfilling of the prophecies of St. Columbkille were now revived, with several new and interesting additions. Roman Catholics, in particular, were seriously alarmed by an account of their extirpation by a murderous band called the black militia, which was always construed to mean the Orangemen. Reports were also spread in the Glynns, county of Antrim, and other Roman Catholic districts, that the Orangemen were coming at night to massacre them in their beds, having entered into a compact to wade kneedeep in their blood. [c] At several times, the night was pretended to have been accidentally discovered on which this massacre was to have taken place, and the Roman Catholics lay armed about the ditches, on the road by which it was believed the assassins must pass, determined on giving them a warm reception. On those alarms, man, woman, and child, deserted the houses and took to the fields, and at one time considerable fears were excited by the shaking, by the wind, of some luxuriant ragweeds that were, for a time, mistaken for the advance of the Orange legions! Their not coming at the times given out was always pretended to be, by the Orangemen having, by some means, learned how well their intended victims were prepared!— About this time several houses were racked at night in the neighbourhood of Glenavy, by persons reputed to be Orangemen.

In the counties of Derry and Donegall, it was reported, and commonly believed, that when the chapel of Covey should be nailed up by the black militia, such persons as repaired to Glenfion would be safe, and on taking a stocking of meal with them for food, it would do them to the end of the wars. Some weak-minded females, however, not waiting for the nailing up of the chapel, repaired to Glenfion with their stocking, but its contents soon becoming exhausted, in sober sadness they returned to their homes. About this time a printed hand-bill was sold about the country, headed with an annexed print, "A zebra foal," which stated, that at a certain place in Ireland, now forgotten by the writer, that an animal had been

[c] In the *Press* newspaper, No. 9, Arthur O'Connor, proprietor and editor, the following was inserted as the Orangemen's oath :—"I, A. B., do hereby swear that I will be true to the king and government, and that I will exterminate, as far as I am able, the Catholics of Ireland."

foaled, beautifully stripped, which immediately after repeated audibly the following distitch:—

"A wet winter, a dry spring,
A bloody summer, and no king."

To strengthen these fabulous allusions on the minds of the ignorant, a book was published in Dublin, entitled "A Paraphrase on the Prophecies of Daniel and John." In this work these prophecies were affirmed to be one and the same; and the beast there mentioned, was said to be "absolute tyrannical monarchy, in a hereditary line," the total annihilation of which was triumphantly pointed out as at hand.[d] At a visitation of Trinity college, Dublin, which ended on the 21st of April, nineteen students were expelled, some for refusing to answer questions put them, others for being *United Irishmen.*

At the assizes held in April for the county of Antrim, Charles M'Clean, weaver, Belfast, was indicted, under the Whiteboy Act, for administering an illegal oath to Patrick King, soldier in the Monaghan regiment of militia. He was found guilty, and sentenced to be transported. John Story, printer, Belfast, was also tried for administering the oath of an *United Irishman* to Owen Farrel, of the same militia, and acquitted. At Downpatrick assizes, John M'Intyre was put upon his trial for seducing and administering an unlawful oath to Lawrence Gleeson, soldier in the Carlow militia, and for endeavouring to seduce James Farrel and Patrick Dillon, of the same corps; the prisoner was acquitted of all the charges. The Rev. Thomas L. Birch was indicted, at the instance of Joseph Harper, for offering said Harper £50, providing he would forbear prosecuting *United Irishmen;* also, with assaulting Richard Harper, son of Joseph—no prosecution. A record for damages was tried at this assizes, wherein William Davison, of Newry, was plaintiff, and Gustavus Matthews and William Saul, officers in the Mourne yeomanry, were defendants. The damages were laid at £200, for the latter having ordered their men to set fire to and burn the plaintiff's premises. The jury gave a verdict for £196, with costs. On the 28th of April,

[d] It is worthy of notice here, that in Cataline's conspiracy at Rome, recourse was had to similar feigned prophecies, in order to heighten the hopes of the conspirators.—*See Hook's Roman History.*

several of the state prisoners from Belfast, confined in Dublin, were put upon their trial and liberated, there being no prosecution.

May 10th. The Ulster committee met in Armagh, eleven members of whom were present.[e] A messenger from Dublin[f] reported that no intelligence had been received from France since that of Mr. B. Teeling, but that a delegate was hourly expected. That the national executive had been changed three times within the last ten days, in order to get good patriots and men of ability, and a plan was laid to seize the city of Dublin, Chapelizod, and Laughlinstown camp, at the same moment. The executive, he said, required the names of the persons chosen by the respective counties to be added to those about to compose the national convention of Ireland. Seven of these persons were then reported as already appointed, viz.: a silversmith for Armagh, a Presbyterian minister for Tyrone, a probationer Presbyterian clergyman for Donegall, a farmer for Louth, an adjutant-general for Derry, a cloth-merchant for Antrim, and a farmer for Monaghan.[g] On or about the same day, a letter was received in Dublin, by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, from Lewins, the agent at Paris, stating that the promised expedition could not be ready for four months. On this intelligence, a resolution was taken by the directory to prepare for a general rising, and messages to that effect were transmitted to all parts of the union; and it was afterwards announced, that on the night of the 23rd of May the general movement was to take place.[h]

In furtherance of the proposed measures, the Ulster pro-

[e] The names of the following persons are recorded as being present on this interesting occasion:—Thomas Bashford, for county of Antrim; John Cormellan, for county of Louth; ——— Donaldson, for county of Armagh; William Cunningham, for county of Monaghan; William M'Keiver, for county of Derry; John Moore, for city of Derry; John Wilson, for city of Derry.—*Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August* 21, 1798.

[f] A messenger from the national executive attended each provincial meeting, to receive their reports, issue orders, and take charge of the monies collected.

[g] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August, 21st, 1798.

[h] So completely had the militia been gained over, that early in May we find Surgeon Lawless holding a conference on the subject of the rising, with delegates from almost all the militia regiments in Ireland.—*Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. II., p. 76.

vincial committee again assembled in Armagh, when two members who had been deputed to assist the provincial executive in their contemplated plans, made their report, the substance of which was, that the citizens of Dublin were to rise and seize upon the government, and the mail-coaches to be stopped and destroyed, as a signal for their friends to act. It was complained that the Ulster directory had taken no steps to put the people in readiness, and that when required to summon the provincial delegates together, they neglected. The reporter declared, that he thought it the duty of the present committee to denounce them, and also to vote them out of office, and they were accordingly divested of their charge. The committee then chosen, were to assemble in Ballymena on the 8th of June. It was likewise agreed, that the adjutant-generals of Down and Antrim should meet on the following day, to form a plan for rising *en masse;* a copy of this plan to be forwarded, with all despatch, to the different adjutant-generals throughout the province, but that if the rising was again put off, this meeting was to assemble in Belfast on the 24th of June; the new addition of one member from each county to the provincial executive, however, to meet at Banbridge, in the house of one Stirling, on the 4th of the said month, and it was announced that a printer of Belfast was to furnish them with a press, for the better issuing of their orders and proclamations. After some other matters of minor import had been discussed, it was finally determined that Blaris camp and the town of Belfast should be taken at the same moment; the three counties of Ulster not to rise until they should hear of the capture of these.[i]

[i] Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August 21st 1798.—Belfast News-Letter, August 10th, 1798.

On the 22nd of May, Arthur O'Connor, Esq., and those made prisoners with him, were put upon their trials, at Maidstone, when all, except Quigly, were acquitted, but Mr. O'Connor and Binns were detained on a new charge, and the former, a few days afterwards, transmitted to Ireland. In the great coat pocket of Quigly was found a paper, purporting to be an address "From the secret committee of England to the executive directory of France," in which it was said—"With the tyranny of England, that of all Europe must fall. Haste, then, great nation! pour forth thy gigantic force! Let the base despot feel thy avenging stroke, and let our oppressed nation carol forth the praises of France at the altar of liberty!" Quigly was found guilty of high treason, and he was executed at Pennington Heath, near Maidstone, June 7th, 1798. In his life, published and written by himself, it is said, that his success in uniting the Catholics and Protestants, there being

In the county of Down, the progress of rebellion was deemed equally satisfactory. At a county meeting of united delegates, held in Saintfield on the 1st of March, it was resolved, that the colonels of regiments be summoned to meet, and that officers be appointed in the room of those who had left the kingdom. Agreeably to this resolution, on the 9th of the same month, seven colonels met in Belfast, who, among other business, appointed three adjutant-generals; and at a meeting of ten colonels, held in Saintfield on the last day of May, they determined to put their corps in readiness to take the field. A strange irresolution appears afterwards to have pervaded their councils. One of the generals sent in his resignation, and at a meeting of colonels, a few days after, only two of them declared for an immediate rising, the others refusing to act without the promised assistance from France. It was, nevertheless, given out, that one of the adjutant-generals was about to establish his head-quarters at Ballinahinch, and that the patriots of the county of Antrim, intended seizing upon the magistrates as hostages, at the opening of the campaign. By the 5th of June, affairs in Down had taken a more warlike turn, the colonels, in a message to the chief adjutant-general, urging him to put the troops in motion, or they would find a man who would. [j]

While matters were thus progressing on the part of the disaffected, the friends of the government were equally on the alert. At military posts the guards were doubled—the yeomen were placed on permanent duty—parties of whom were daily hastening to Belfast or Carrickfergus for ammunition or arms. [k] Patrols of cavalry traversed the roads at night,

many deep-rooted prejudices on both sides, would have been comparatively trifling, had it not been the spirited exertions of that truly respectable, virtuous, and enlightened body, the Dissenters of the county of Antrim, but chiefly and in particular, those of Belfast. He thus writes, after sentence of death was passed. "You know of the attachment I had for Belfast, even so far as to wish my ashes there." He had expressed a wish that his bones should rest at Belfast, but this was denied. He was a native of the neighbourhood of Charlemont, but for some time previous to his becoming so deeply engaged in the politics of the country, he had resided at Dundalk.

[j] The chief duties of the adjutant-generals were to obtain returns of the state of each regiment; the number of hills in the district; the state of the roads; how many men could be quartered in each town or village; and who were the most zealous patriots.—*Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, August 21st*, 1798.

[k] At this period there were 23 corps of yeomanry in the county of Antrim, 16 corps in Down, and 12 in that of Derry.

and no persons were permitted to be abroad from nine o'clock in the evening until five in the morning. The names of the inhabitants of each house were ordered to be posted on their outer doors, and the names of such strangers who should arrive to be immediately added. This roll to be called over at any hour the civil or military authorities might deem fit, to see that none were absent. None were permitted to go from home without a pass, signed by a magistrate, or some military officer.

In this distracted state of things, public credit became shaken to the foundation, and the common ties of the community seemed hastening to a convulsive dissolution. Friends, when differing in political creeds, cancelled at once the friendships of youth, and the mutual obligation of years, and in numerous instances relationships were equally disregarded from a similar cause. Though the usual business of the country was in a great measure suspended, this scarcely appeared a matter of regret with the working classes, and it was said, that in a short time, with those who wrought and with those who played, it would be all the same!

On intelligence that the northern mail coach had been stopped and burned at Santry by the rebels, on the night of the 23rd of May, the Cork coach at Naas, that for Athlone at Lucan, and the Limerick coach at the Curragh, the above regulations were strictly enforced. Four days after, martial law was proclaimed throughout the north; many suspicious persons were arrested, some fire-arms were surrendered, and a court-martial assembled in Belfast for the trial of such prisoners as should be brought before it. On the 28th, John Kelso, charged with being an *United Irishman*, and with having concealed arms, received 200 lashes in the street, by the sentence of this court; and on the same day another man was also flogged on Kelso's extorted information. A few days afterwards, three persons, —— Thompson, —— Hanna, and —— Smith, were also flogged in the streets of Belfast, charged with seditious practices. On the 30th, two brass field-pieces, six-pounders, the property of the late Belfast volunteers, were found in a cow-house off North-street, Belfast, and two other pieces belonging to the same corps, and of the like calibre, were dug up on

the Short-strand near that town. Two brass cannon, three-pounders, of the Lisburn volunteers, had been surrendered to the military on the previous day.

Unawed by the presence of the numerous military everywhere in arms, the *United Irishmen* continued indefatigable to perfect their arrangements. Meetings of their committees continued to be held—confidential agents, bearing verbal messages, traversed the country—and on the 29th of May a circular notice was issued by the commander-in-chief of the county of Antrim, for the officers composing the military committee, to meet him on the 1st of June, at Parkgate, on matters of the highest import. This summons was duly attended by most of the committee, but when about to proceed to business, they were alarmed by a report from one of their scouts that a body of dragoons was advancing from Antrim, on which they immediately dispersed. The dragoons, however, passed on without halting, but such a train of fears had been excited that the committee did not again assemble at Parkgate, but retired, in a straggling manner, to Templepatrick. Here the general, on addressing the assembly, made a resignation of his high office. The committee was astounded at such an unlooked-for event, which they regretted the more as they knew not where to find a proper successor. Several persons were, however, proposed, and their respective merits discussed, but the committee still lingered in their decision. Three persons were at length proposed, each of whom appeared to enjoy their confidence; but as these were absent, it was finally agreed, that he of these who should be first found, by persons then appointed to deliver his charge, should be the honoured man.[1] It was likewise determined, that in order to come to a final decision on the great question of peace or war, that the commanders of corps should meet on the second day after, on the northern side of Ballyboley mountain, at a secluded place called the Sheep-ree.

On the same day, four delegates from the neighbourhood of Randalstown, met, by appointment, at Castledawson, six dele-

[1] One of these persons was the unfortunate Henry Munroe, another John Coulter, the proprietor of a linen bleachfield at Collin, near Lisburn, and the third a gentleman belonging to the neighbourhood of Larne.

gates from the villages or towns of Garvagh, Kilrea, and Maghera; those from the latter, were William M'Keiver, and Walter Graham. These persons determined that risings should take place at those towns, at the same hour as at Toome and Randalstown, in order to distract the attention of the army. They were also to secure and disarm the yeomen and Orangemen of their respective districts; and, if necessary, afterwards to form a junction with the patriots of Antrim, with whom a daily correspondence was to be maintained by the way of Toome.

June 4. His Majesty's birth-day was celebrated in Belfast by a general illumination. A notice had been issued by General Nugent, commanding the military in that town, that candles should not be placed in shop windows, nor the lower apartment of houses; yet many persons had their shop or parlour windows broken by the military and yeomen, because these windows were not lighted. It being reported that a rising would take place on that night, late in the evening a strong detachment of the military, with cannon and lighted matches, were marched through the principal streets.

In accordance with the decision at Templepatrick, 35 colonels, or representatives of corps, met at the appointed time and place. The business of the day commenced by an inquiry, if that the persons appointed to wait upon those deputed to the chief command, had delivered their charge. It was briefly answered in the negative, which produced some severe reflections regarding their indifference to the national interest, in the course of which altercation it was urged, that a rising should immediately take place without waiting for foreign aid, as they had now, for the third time, been disappointed. This was strenuously opposed on the ground that their force, though numerous, were imperfectly organized, and hence unfit for immediate warfare. The observations were followed by a warm debate, and on the question being put to the vote, it was decided that they should continue to wait for the arrival of the French. Several, however, protested loudly against any further delay, and stigmatized the whole proceedings as dastardly in the extreme, hostile to the rights of man and liberties of Ireland, and retired growling from the hill.

The greater number of the meeting proceeded homeward by the village of Ballyeaston, where a few members halted, and where was then waiting a number of inferior officers, with a leading gentleman belonging to Belfast, all anxious to learn the decision of the day. On this being known, the crowd burst forth into an open uproar, and the shouts of aristocrats, despots, cowards, villains, and even traitors were heard from the multitude. The unpopular leaders sought shelter from the "pelting of the pitiless storm." Amidst horrid threats and confusion, a meeting was convened anew, at which the Belfast gentleman presided, the decision at the Sheep-ree was reversed, and the sovereign people declared they were appeased!

Harmony being restored, the day of the insurrection was fixed upon, as had been originally projected, viz., Thursday, the 7th of June. A more distant day would have been preferred, but as the magistrates of the county were to meet upon that day in the town of Antrim, it was determined not to let slip the opportunity of securing them for hostages. Messages to this effect were forwarded to such colonels as were absent at this important juncture; the following copy of one of these laconic epistles is taken from *Teeling's Personal Narrative*, page 232:—

"Army of Ulster! To-morrow we march for Antrim, drive the garrison of Randalstown before you, and hasten to form a junction with the commander-in-chief. First year of liberty, 6th day of June, 1798.

HENRY JOY M'CRACKEN."

Of the persons who had thus hurried the country into a civil war, and now hailed the near approach of the revolutionary storm, not one of them were of the landed proprietors, merchants, or influential gentlemen of the county. With a few exceptions, they were men of principles as desperate as their fortunes, and who, hence, perhaps imagined, that in the confusion incident to a civil war, some events might spring up that would advance their interest. Several of the most active on this occasion were common tradesmen, who, for years previous, had neglected their own affairs to attend to those of the state, while they made no secret of bettering their condition by the

plunder of the wealthy, and hence preferred the orgies of their midnight cabinet to the humble vocations of the last or the loom. In fact, on a review of the body by whom war was now waged, the satirical saying, that "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel," seemed, in many instances, really true.

From this period, the glorious reign of equality was said to be at hand, and nothing was talked of but preparations for the eventful day. Fire-arms were brought from where they had been secreted, and pike-heads were shafted, and others continued to be forged—while workmen,

> "With busy hammers closing rivets up,
> Gave dreadful note of preparation."

Females were equally busied, many in baking oaten cakes, and other culinary preparations, while others sewed up cloth into small bags to carry three days provisions, and which was commonly believed would be sufficient for the campaign. Throughout the country these preliminary preparations were easily managed; but in towns where the military or yeomanry were quartered, they were matters of no little difficulty and danger. In Belfast, though the streets were patrolled by the military at all hours, guards placed on all the public roads leading out of the town, and all suspicious persons examined or arrested, such was the daring enterprise of the disaffected, that a sack containing flints, swords, and a green flag, was passed out to the country on a car, in the wake of another car guarded by yeomen, returning home with ammunition! The sack containing these articles was untied, and thrown carelessly on an empty car, and from the mouth of the sack projected weavers old heddles. Mingled with the yeomen was a countryman, owner of the horse and car; of these, however, he seemed to take no notice; and beneath his old great coat was suspended, by a rope resting upon his shoulders, 18 swords! On passing the guards stationed on the roads, he whipped his horse, and parted company with the yeomen.

The state of society at this period broadly displayed those features of civil commotion so truly depicted by the poet, as characteristic of intestine convulsion, viz., "Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap,"—and though songs and

laughter were also occasionally heard from the young and thoughtless, it was easy to perceive, from the looks of many, that all was far from at ease within. As the time of the rising roached, an ominous gloom seemed to steal over society, and to outward appearance all seemed unusually calm—it was, however, such a calm, as mariners augur to forbode the coming hurricane, or travellers the sameil of the desert—

> "—— Or, as we often see, against some storm,
> A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
> The bold wind speechless, and the orb below
> As hush as death—anon the dreadful thunder
> Doth rend the region."

Agreeable to concerted measures, on the morning of the 7th of June, the green flag was displayed at the hamlet of Roughfort, about six miles from Belfast. Some twenty persons were here assembled with arms, among whom appeared, as leader, Henry Joy M'Cracken, from Belfast; but though the people of that neighbourhood, were, in the language of that day, esteemed good patriots, and had been apprized of the rising, the thinness of their present muster testified, that danger is "more often found than sought."

For some time these persons kept moving about, evidently undetermined how to act, when a man on horseback was seen posting towards them from the hamlet of Carnmoney, and in a few minutes drew up his steed near the flagstaff. He proved to be a well-known emissary, last from Ballynure, who briefly stated, that victory had already crowned their efforts, that the patriots of Larne had led the way; the military in that town had been defeated, and compelled to surrender; he had hastened thither to proclaim the glorious news, and everywhere, as he passed, the national flag was unfurled. This intelligence produced an immediate effect; the welkin rung with three hearty cheers, and messengers were despatched about the adjoining country, to summon to the field those who still lingered sharing in the glories of the day.

Presently a number of men, armed with pikes or muskets, were seen hastening towards the flag-staff, who, as they arrived, were heartily cheered. While thus mustering, they were joined by a numerous corps from Carnmoney, under the orders

of a young farmer named Blackburn; and the whole being soon after formed into line, they moved off to form a junction with their friends at Templepatrick, where we shall now leave them and proceed to notice the progress of the rising at other places.

In Larne, where hostilities first commenced, the insurgents began to assemble in arms by eleven o'clock on the night of the 6th, at a place near that town called the Cold Well. Their numbers amounted to about 250, at least sixty of whom were armed with muskets, and the others, with a few exceptions, carried pikes or pitchforks. Offensive operations were, for some time, retarded by the absence of their chief commander, who, on inquiry, was discovered to have sailed the previous evening for the Isle of Man. This difficulty was at length surmounted by the promotion of another officer in his room, and about two o'clock on the morning of the 7th they advanced into the town in two divisions, the greater number of whom took post near the Pound. In the town were then quartered an officer and twenty men of the Tay Scottish Fencible regiment, who occupied a house in the town as a barrack. On the evening of the 6th, they had been apprized that a rising of the disaffected would certainly take place on that night; the officer had, therefore, made some suspicious persons prisoners, and with a few loyalists, by whom he had been joined, had been on the alert, without having observed any movements to countenance the reports received. However, at half-past 2 o'clock, some persons were observed crossing the street in a hurried manner, on which the officer, with a few men, proceeded in that direction, to see if there was really an unusual stir. They soon found themselves assailed by the main body of the insurgents, and from the great disparity of numbers, the soldiers were soon compelled to retreat, leaving three of their number dead, and having the like number wounded, one of whom was their commander. Only one of the rebels is said to have been killed, but several were severely wounded, one of whom died a few days after.

On the retreat of the military, they concentrated their small and dispirited force at the barrack, expecting every moment to be attacked. No dispositions were, however, made by the

insurgents to follow up their advantage, but on George A. M'Claverty, Esq., a neighbouring magistrate, being brought in prisoner, it was proposed that he should be sent into the barrack with a summons, demanding the immediate surrender of the soldiers. Mr. M'Claverty protested loudly against his being the bearer of such a message, on which it was suggested that he should be put in front, while a party in his rear advanced to attack the soldiers. This barbarous proposal was also rejected, but a summons was sent into the barrack by another hand, but it was returned unopened, the officer declaring that they would defend themselves to the last extremity. This message seemed to paralyze the exertions of the insurgents, who now retired to the Millbrae, where Mr. M'Claverty ventured to hint that they should return to their homes, while he would use his best interest with the government for their pardon. About this time they were joined by Edward J. Agnew, Esq., of Kilwaughter, who had been sent for on the request of Mr. M'Claverty, in hopes that he would have been enabled to persuade the people to give up their arms, and to cease farther warfare. However, his advice and entreaties were equally unsuccessful, and after his most earnest endeavours, all the favour obtained was leave to return to Kilwaughter. The insurgents were now joined by several straggling parties, the greater number of whom had been brought from their hiding places. At the same time an account was pretended to have been received of the capture of the castle of Carrickfergus that morning by their friends, on which three hearty cheers were given, and about eleven o'clock, they moved off in high spirits with their prisoner, for the appointed general rendezvous on Donegore hill.

At the village of Ballycarry, four miles from Carrickfergus, the insurgents assembled on the morning of the 7th, in considerable force, a party of whom were immediately despatched to Redhall, to secure some fire-arms known to be in that mansion. This service being soon effected, the entire body proceeded for Larne, for the purpose of forming a junction with their friends in that town. Near the hamlet of Glynn they were met by a few armed stragglers, who announced their victory at Larne, and the departure of the main body some

time before for the camp. Mutual congratulations having passed on the successes of the auspicious day, those bodies also moved for Donegore, bringing with them two prisoners, the one a soldier, the other a farmer—the latter not having taken the oath of a *United Irishman*, declared he had no right to "turn out."[m] Near Mounthill, the Carrickfergus yeomen cavalry were seen on another road about half a mile distant, on which each party halted, and those of the insurgents with fire-arms were ordered in front. No farther hostile dispositions were made on either side, and after gazing upon each other for some time, they resumed their respective routes.

At the towns of Ballyclare, Belleaston, Ballynure, and their respective districts, the rebels mustered in great force on the morning of the 7th. Many, nevertheless, were reported absent, the greater number of whom were esteemed veteran patriots, who, for years previous, had declared that their highest ambition was to serve in the army of the Irish republic. On inquiries made regarding the numerous defaulters, some were reported to have been suddenly seized with the most violent bowel complaints, others with cramps or rheumatic pains; the wives of several were given out as at the point of death; some only the night before were said to have had their ankles strained, but for the absence of the greater number, not even a pretext was assigned. Parties were immediately sent out in search of the fugitives, some of whom were discovered, and compelled to "turn out" from their hiding places, while others, on being dragged forth, protested they would not go to fight, and if they must die, they would rather die where they were. Some of these, notwithstanding their piteous wailings, were forced along to the ranks, while others, after a few hearty kicks, were suffered to remain.

In Ballyclare, their chief commander was a wheelwright, with whom was associated a man who had been for some time in the regular army, and hence he was believed to be an adept in martial tactics. About half-past ten o'clock this body was joined by a regiment from Belleaston and Ballyboley, under the orders of a respectable dealer of the former place. The

[m] In speaking of this insurrection it is very rarely called a rebellion, but commonly the "turn out;" the call used at the time, to those who appeared tardy to come forth to the ranks.

bodies were now formed into sections, every thirteenth man of whom was an officer of one rank or other. During these arrangements, accounts were said to have been received of the capture of the castle of Carrickfergus that morning by storm. This news appeared to give new life to their proceedings; shouts of joy reverberated throughout the line, while during these deafening cheers, orders were given to march, and the whole took the road leading to Antrim. These corps bore with them the colours or flags of their former volunteer companies. On that of Belleaston was in large capitals, "*Liberty and our country*," and on Ballyclare, "*Fear no danger*." By the way, many were pressed into the service, and near Doagh they were joined by another corps commanded by a farmer of that neighbourhood. Their progress was marked by songs, cheers, and peals of laughter, and all seemed to say,—

"Blithe souls and merry hearts have we."

The Ballynure regiment proceeded by a different route, joining, by the way, those from Larne. Just before their junction, the following incident took place, which afterwards became the subject of conversation:—In front of the line, on horseback, rode Larry Dempsy, a deserter from the 24th dragoons, who, on this occassion, flourished a rusty sword, by which he, at times, appeared to direct the movements of the corps. The pride of office, for Larry was now an adjutant, had thrown him off his guard, and he exclaimed, in a rich Munster brogue, "By J——s, boys, we'll pay the rascals this day for the battle of the Boyne." This untimely slip of Larry excited no little uneasiness, and he was calmly cautioned by a brother officer, and told not to use such language, as it would not do! The bustle that now took place in congratulating the heroes of Larne on their glorious victory, saved Larry from farther rebuke, but allusions continued to be made to his words, until they arrived in the vicinity of Donegore hill, when the novelty of the scene changed the conversation.

In the towns of Belfast, Lisburn, and Carrickfergus, the disaffected were awed into submission by their numerous garrisons, yet some days previous, several zealous adherents from

these towns passed into the country, and were actively engaged in the insurgent ranks; and, on the night of the 6th of June, at a meeting of *United Irishmen*, held near the latter town, where it was, with a few exceptions, determined not to attempt a rising until they should learn the result of the forthcoming day. In fact, in almost every town, village, or hamlet, in the county of Antrim, hostile movements, in a greater or lesser degree, took place, but as several of these bodies were not engaged in the assault on the towns of Randalstown, Antrim, or Ballymena, we proceed with an account of the actions at these places—afterwards following up the lesser events of the day in detail.

In the parishes of Drumaul, Dunean, district of Grange, and part of the parish of Connor, the insurgents assembled in great force on the appointed day, for the purpose of co-operating in an assault upon the town of Randalstown. In that town were then quartered about fifty of the Toome yeomanry under the orders of Captain Henry Ellis. On the preceding day he had been apprised of some hostile preparations in his neighbourhood, and during the night a few cavalry sent out to patrole were made prisoners on the Ballymena road.

About 12 o'clock, A.M. the insurgents' column was seen advancing in great force, on the roads leading into the town, their political orders distinguished by their several banners or flags; the ensigns of those merely *United Irishmen* were merely pieces of green stuff attached to a pike shaft; those of the defenders were of the same material, but edged with white or yellow, a large yellow cross in the field. Some of these were ornamented in a fanciful manner with a yellow harp without a crown, and on, at least, one, was wrought in Roman capitals, "REMEMBER ARMAGH." The regular returns of the leaders of the defenders in the county of Antrim, in round numbers, only amounted to 8500.

On the arrival of these bodies near the town, some delay took place as to which should advance first to the attack, and at length it was determined that they should advance together, which they did. The chief commander, until this time, appeared to be a person named Henderson, but he now deserting his post, was filled up by another named Dickson, who after-

wards behaved with fearless intrepidity. Their number, at this time, has been estimated at 9,000 men, but though very numerous, they have probably been overrated.

At this time, they, the yeomanry, were drawn up across the street, between whom and the insurgents, who had advanced by the Toome road, firing immediately commenced, but the former being also about to be assailed in their rear, retreated into the market-house, and securing the gates, retired to the upper story, while the insurgents, taking possession of the opposite houses, a desultory warfare was, for some time, kept up, with little effect on either side. Judging from the firing kept up during this conflict, never were combatants less disposed to deeds of blood. Seldom did any of either appear in sight; the muzzles of the guns were merely seen, and they were fired off either by those protected by the window jambs, or who lay squatted on the floor. During this contest, some, however, of the insurgents, ventured in close to the walls of the market-house, and as their opponents pointed out their pieces to fire, they knocked them aside with their pikes. This caution, however, was commonly unnecessary, as the contents of their guns rarely descended lower than the roof of the adjoining house, so that if any person was killed or wounded, they had themselves to blame.

The warfare had continued for about forty minutes in this way, when a woman brought out some burning straw from an adjoining house, and thrust it through the iron gratings of the market-house. This fire being likewise fed with straw by those without, and also by some of the like material lying about within, the place was soon enveloped in smoke and flame. The yeomen now ceased firing, and cried out that they had surrendered, and the stairs leading to the loft being burnt down, they were relieved from their perilous situation by ladders raised against the windows from the street. In this affair three of the yeomen were killed, and five wounded; of the rebels two were killed, but their wounded could not be ascertained.

Immediately on the surrender of the yeomen they were disarmed and sent off under a strong guard to Grogan island, an insurgent encampment then forming about one mile distant;

and on the following morning their officers, Ellis and Jones, were forwarded, under an escort, to Ballymena, which, at this time, was regarded as head-quarters.

The capture of Randalstown being thus effected, a strong division, chiefly consisting of those from Dunean and Grange, were ordered home to throw down Toome bridge, lest they should be attacked in their rear by troops from the county of Derry. At the same time a numerous body under their respective leaders, Orr, Dickson, Maginnis, and Halliday, the former of whom appeared chief commander, hastened to assist in the meditated attack upon the town of Antrim.

The Toome column had scarcely proceeded about one mile and a half homeward, when they were met by a messenger, by whom they were informed that some cavalry from Derry had already passed the bridge, and were on their way to Randalstown; on which intelligence they moved off the great road, and took post nearly a mile distant in the fields. Presently the horsemen came in sight. They were soon distinguished to be the Salterstown yeomen troop, under the orders of Captain Patterson. On their observing themselves so near an armed host, they slackened their pace, and wheeled about, to return. At this moment a shot was discharged by one of the insurgents, from a long fowling-piece. The ball hit one of the cavalry, who fell, while his horse on looking at his fallen rider, brought up their rear. A hard run was now made by a number of the insurgents towards the fallen horsemen; and a furious struggle took place for his boots and buckskin breeches, which were torn off as quickly as they could have been by so many Cossacks or Arabs. He proved to be a young man named Hull, from Magherafelt, who died two days after of his wound.

The corps continued their route, to execute the service on which they had been deputed, and about 6 o'clock in the evening commenced the destruction of the bridge. From its excellent masonry it proved a work of no little difficulty and labour, and resisted, for nearly 14 hours, the most earnest application of the crow-bar, spade, and pick-axe, when a little after 8 o'clock, on the morning of the 8th, the centre arch fell into the river with a tremendous crash.

In the evening, the Randalstown insurgents, alarmed by the

report of the defeat of their friends at Antrim, evacuated that town, and retired to their encampment at Grogan island, and in the course of the night many stole off home. Many, however, were merry over their battle, and some omens of dissention were even visible, the Protestant party toasting success to the Irish union, while the Roman Catholics merely drank success to the real defenders—meaning themselves.

Agreeably to preconcerted arrangements, on the night of the 7th, a rising took place at Maghera, county of Derry, to the amount of at least 5000 men, about 500 of whom had fire-arms; the others were armed with pikes, pitch-forks, and turf spades. On the evening of the 6th, one of the Kilrea delegates joined the yeomen, and turned informer, hence, no rising was attempted there, but a partial rising took place at Garvagh, but not being so numerous as had been expected, they were deserted by their leaders, and soon after dispersed. During the night of the 7th, two messengers from Maghera were despatched to Antrim, to learn if that their forces were wanted in Antrim; and they were instructed to hasten thither with all speed. They were scarcely gone homeward, when accounts reached Toome of the defeat at Antrim on the 7th, and the wounding of their respected landlord, Lord O'Neill, and that General Knox, and Colonel Leigh were advancing upon Maghera and Castledawson. In this dilemma, it was determined to redouble their efforts to throw down the bridge, and to let the Maghera people shift for themselves! In the mean time, the insurgents at Maghera had received intelligence that the army were advancing upon them, and that the Boveagh cavalry, under Captain Keyland were already seen at some distance, the whole legion assembled, fled, leaving their leaders to make the best terms they could. The chief leaders upon this occasion were William M'Keiver, William Harper, and Walter Graham. The two former effected their escape to America, but the latter was betrayed at Newtownlimavady into the hands of the military, suffered the extreme penalty of the law, as did a person named Hardy.

While hosts were thus pressing forward to Antrim, Major Seddons, commandant in that town, had, about nine o'clock on the same morning, received a message from General Nugent,

acquainting him that the town was about to be attacked by the rebels, and that troops were ordered to his support. The garrison of Antrim, at this time, consisted of one troop of the 22nd dragoons, a company of yeomen belonging to the town, and about forty other inhabitants who had been summoned that morning to take up arms, but on the services of many of these no dependence could be placed. The common alarm was greatly heightened by the discovery that several of the disaffected had left the town that morning, as, was believed, to assist in the meditated attack. On searching the premises of some of these, pike-heads were found, on which two of their houses were set on fire and consumed. At the same time thirty-five suspected persons were arrested, and lodged in the great room above the market-house.

About eleven o'clock, several persons came into the town from the country, each of whom brought a varying tale. They, however, agreed that the people were everywhere in arms and concentrating their numbers on Dunegore hill, where they purposed an encampment. Soon after several magistrates arrived to attend the proposed meeting, among whom were James S. Moore, and Robert Gamble, Esqrs. They had come from Ballymena that morning, where they had left all quiet, but they had been assailed by some armed men near Kells.

At half-past one o'clock, the dragoons stationed on the look out reported that immense bodies of armed men were advancing on the Ballyclare and Templepatrick roads, and soon after, these halted near the head of the Scotch-quarter, or east end of the town. In each column those armed with muskets were in front, and were mostly old volunteers; in the rear of the Templepatrick division was a brass six-pounder cannon fixed on the wheels of an old chaise, and filled to the muzzle with musket balls. This piece was under the direction of deserters, chiefly from the artillery, but they had neither slow match nor portfires, peat, carried by one of the gunners, in an iron pot, serving for both. [o] The column consisted chiefly

[o] This was one of the Belfast volunteer cannon that had been long secreted in the Presbyterian meeting-house of Templepatrick. The other cannon, hid in the same house, was also dug up, but having only a few rounds of ammunition, and no carriage, it was suffered to remain near where hid, and on the following day was surrendered to the army.

of the Carnmoney, Roughfort, and Templepatrick regiments, and had been joined at Muckamore by those of that district, Crumlin, and Killead, and now filled the road, their pikes appearing above the adjoining hedges, as far as the eye could reach.

This halt was occasioned by the smoke still issuing from the houses that had been set on fire, the cause of which they were anxious to learn before they entered the town. During this delay, messengers passed several times across the fields between those on the different roads, and a little after two o'clock the whole were again in motion, amounting to upwards of 7000 men. Notwithstanding these numbers, from their coming within about a mile of Antrim, their forces had been diminishing on various pretences, some by halting, as they said, to ease nature, others by sitting down pretending to take gravel out of their shoes, and many made off without assigning any cause whatever, none of whom ever again joined the ranks; these were, however, comparatively few, compared with those who threw away their arms on the order given to advance, who scampered off without minding, in the least, the threats or scoffs of their companions. The desertions from the Ballyclare division, in particular, has been computed to amount to nearly one-fifth of their original number.

Those on the Templepatrick road moved down by the Scotch-quarter or east end of the main street. Their advanced division was told off for street firing; in their rear came the field-piece, and behind it were the numerous pikemen. Those on the Ballyclare road did not enter the town, but turned off to their right across the fields, and defiled down the north side of the town, for the purpose of entering it by Bow-lane. A division from Randalstown was also to have entered by Pedie's-lane; by these arrangements it was purposed to place the military between two fires, by which, it was believed, they must immediately surrender, or be cut to pieces.

The delay occasioned by the smoke proved highly fortunate for the garrison, as, in the interim, a reinforcement had arrived from Lisburn, consisting of two troops of the 22nd dragoons, a troop of yeomen cavalry (Maragel), and a detachment of artillery with two pieces of cannon. These were under the

rders of Colonel Lumley of the 22nd dragoons, who had hastened forward before the 4th light battalion, under Colonel Clavairy, from Blaris camp, ere the troops on their way from Belfast could possibly arrive. The artillery took post in the street, in a line with the west side of the entrance from Belfast, by Massereene bridge—the yeomen of the town, in eschalon, were stationed on their flanks, and the cavalry were drawn up in their rear on the sides of the street, to be ready to act as circumstances might appear to require.

By the time these momentary dispositions were completed, the head of the insurgent column, which moved down the main street, had halted about eight or ten perches above the church, and immediately fired a volley. This was the next moment answered by that of the artillery and yeomen, but though the distance was scarcely 200 yards, with little effect on either side. The artillery continued to fire several rounds of grape shot with great rapidity, which, had their guns been judiciously laid, must have swept their opponents off the street; but so ill were they directed, that the only injury felt by the insurgents from their fire, was the shot casting up some gravel in the street—while the fire of the yeomanry is reported to have been almost equally inefficacious.

That no impression had been made on the enemy by the fire of the cannon, had probably been observed by those who had them in charge, as at this time a bombadier was killed by a musket ball, in the act of laying anew one of the guns. The rebel musketeers perhaps anticipating more fatal effects from an alteration making in the direction of the guns, made a sudden rush from the street over the wall of the adjoining church-yard, which, at the part where they passed over, was only about four feet high—lower down, however, the wall was much higher, and it also commanded, in a great measure, the adjoining street. At this time the slight current of air stirring, carried the smoke raised by the firing on the faces of the military, who were thus, for a time, deprived of seeing what was passing in their front. Hence the slackening of the fire of the insurgents, as they clambered over the wall, had been mistaken for their having fallen into confusion, or retreat, and the cannon and yeomen were ordered to cease firing; about 80 of the dra-

goons were formed into a line, and headed by Colonel Lumley —they made a furious charge up the street. At setting out, they were met by a discharge from the six pounder cannon of the rebels, which, until this time, had been unobserved. When nearly up with this gun, it was again discharged with still more fearful effect, while, at the same time, they also sustained a destructive fire from those in the church-yard. One of the wheels of the rebel cannon was broken down by this last shot, or, according to another account, from one of the wounded horses having fallen upon it. Be this as it may, it was rendered unfit for farther service, and after an attempt made to prop up the broken wheel, it was abandoned.

Notwithstanding the severe loss sustained, the charge was vigourously continued, until they became entangled among the numerous pikemen who filled the street, who closing upon them, their swords were found a very inefficacious weapon, where, perhaps, a dozen pikes were at once directed against the rider or his horse. From this unequal contest they were soon compelled to retire, and they again suffered some loss as they passed the church, from the fire of those in the yard.

The greater number of the horsemen retreated by Massereene bridge, the artillery retired farther down the street, nearly opposite the entrance from Bow-lane, and the yeomen hastened their retreat into the garden of Massereene castle, the wall of which was an excellent defence, and commanded, in a great degree, the main street as far as the church. These movements had become imperative, as it was confidently asserted that they were about to be attacked in their rear. This report proved really true; and the force was the Ballyclare division, who agreeable to concerted measures, were appointed to enter the town by Bow-lane. In their progress, a company were ordered to join a corp under the orders of John Story, about to enter by Pedie's-lane, but by this time the firing had commenced by those of Templepatrick, and the entreaties and threats of Story were equally unavailing, his men, one and all, refused to quit the lane, and go out to the street.[p]

At length the head of the Ballyclare column entered the main street, where they were met by a volley from the yeomen,

[p] Trial of John Story, Belfast News-Letter, July 3. 1793.

about to enter the castle garden—and also by the fire of those called loyalists who lined the garden wall. Appalled by the fall of a number of their men, in tumultuous confusion those who had entered the street fled back into the lane, many of whom continued their flight across the fields. However, about one-half of the column, as if ashamed of their timidity, halted in the adjoining gardens, and after some consultation, they determined to make another effort to enter the town, which they did by passing by the rear of some ruinous houses, and came into the main street, a little east of the market-house. From the situation of this building in the street, they were also, in a great measure, covered from the fire which continued to issue from the garden wall, on the least chance of its doing execution; while, at the same time, chance shots were heard from those in the church-yard.

Those from Ballyclare, as they entered, were ranged on the northern side of the street, and such as had fire-arms immediately commenced firing upon some wounded and straggling horsemen, which remained a little farther down on the opposite side, who, unable to offer opposition with any chance of success, retired by Bow-lane; while the artillery having two of their number killed, and without any support, fled, leaving their guns and tumbrils in the street. On their retreat, a party of rebels rushed forward with loud cheers to seize the cannon, but every man of these are said to have been killed by the fire from those in the garden, and no farther attempt of the kind was made. At length a woman belonging to the town, of herculean strength, named Gordon, ventured out and seized the straggling horses. She yoked them to the tumbrils, and drew them in under cover of the garden wall, which having secured of herself, with the help of a brave artillery man, who had not left his charge, they dragged the two guns along side the tumbrils. Not a shot was fired at her during this service, very few of the insurgents being in sight at the time.

At this time, only a few shots were heard from the garden wall, those within only firing when persons appeared in the street. Thus greviously annoyed by their fire, by which many had been killed and wounded, it was purposed by M'Cracken, who was now engaged in rallying his troops, that a detach-

ment, headed by himself, should pass down by the north side of the town, and through a small wood, force the garden gate in the rear, and cut off the rascals in the garden, from whom they had suffered so much. In Bow-lane, as observed above, were then collected a number of the scattered dragoons, who, on seeing a considerable body coming, as they believed, to attack them, and to cut off their retreat, set off on the Randalstown road at full gallop. At this time a large body of men, the chief commander of whom was Samuel Orr, had advanced from Randalstown, who had now halted, and their other leaders, Dickson, Halliday, and Maginnis, not then knowing that the town was in possession of the insurgents, were engaged in an angry discussion, as to which of the divisions should enter the town at Patie's, and which by Bow-lane. At the height of their discussion, the dragoons hove in sight, and them from Randalstown supposing that their friends in Antrim had been defeated, immediately fled, each man deeming himself lucky in effecting his escape. This strange scene had been observed by the party of M'Cracken, who were seized with panic, and they refused to go farther. He, however, insisted on their advancing, but fair words or threats were equally disregarded, and seizing a pike, he swore he would destroy the first one who offered to run away. This threat, however, only served to increase the confusion, and in attempting to stop some who were making off, he was thrown down by the pressure of the crowd, who letting fall their weapons, they scampered away in promiscuous confusion.

On this occurrence being known, a person named M'Givern, belonging to the town of Antrim, and one of those who had left it that morning for the purpose of assisting in its attack, volunteered to lead a party against the yeomen, on the service purposed by M'Cracken. After some time, 53 persons armed with muskets proffered their service, but as they were about to march off, it was announced that the army from Belfast were at the head of the town, and, in a moment after, the whole party, with their numerous friends who were regaling themselves in the adjoining houses, were in tumultuous retreat.

This reinforcement was under the orders of Colonel James Durham, of the Fifeshire fencible regiment, and consisted of

one troop of the 22nd dragoons, the Belfast yeoman cavalry, about 300 of the Monaghan militia, and a detachment of artillery with two field six-pounders. Some round shot were fired by these in their advance down the street, but by this time the insurgents were mostly clear of the town, and out of the way of either shot or shell. It being reported that many of the insurgents were secreted in the houses, single files of men were sent down in rear of the houses, as the main body proceeded by the street, and many of the inhabitants fled into their gardens, and by not having kept their houses, lost their lives.

About twenty minutes after their arrival, the third light battalion arrived from Blaris, bringing with them some thirty prisoners whom they had taken by the way, with arms in their hands, who were disposed of in a very summary manner, as were such wounded as were found about the gardens and streets. This battalion remained in the town for the night, and the artillery were ordered to take post in Shane's castle. In the course of the night they amply justified the public opinion, formerly given by General Abercromby, of the disordered state of discipline in the British army, of whom, at present, it is enough to say, that throughout the night their conduct exhibited ample proofs. Soon after their arrival in that mansion, a serjeant was sent to the adjoining village to purchase bread and other refreshments. On passing a little thicket on his way, two stout fellows rushed out, made him prisoner, disarmed him of his sword, and bore him forcibly along, before, in his surprise, he had time to call out for assistance, or even look about. They carried him off that evening to near Kells, where he was kept to their final dispersion on the following Saturday. We shall here leave them, and proceed to notice the progress of the insurrection in other parts of the country.

At Glenarm, the rebellion began on the 7th, by the insurgents taking prisoners some yeomen and loyalists, in retaliation for some of their friends arrested by the former on the previous day. Immediately after, the rebels began to assemble in considerable numbers on Bellavie hill, near that town, while the yeomen corps took post in the castle of the Earl of Antrim, in its immediate vicinity. During the day, some loyalists from Larne,

who were hastening to Glenarm, not being aware that it was in the hands of the insurgents, were made prisoners by a party of insurgents, and carried to Bellavie, and threatened to be shot. On their inquiry by whose order they were detained, they were answered by a fellow named Rourke, "by the authority of the republic." On the 8th, an exchange of prisoners took place, man for man. Among those liberated by the yeomen, was the Rev. Robert Achison, Presbyterian minister of Glenarm, who immediately after took the chief command of the insurgents. On the arrival of Achison in the camp, it was purposed by the leaders from the Glynn, that they should immediately march for the general rendezvous at Dunagore, but this proposal, after some debate, was laid aside, and it was agreed that they should wait to the following day. The number upon Bellavie hill on this evening was computed at 1800 men, besides many women, boys, and children, and a report being spread that Belfast and Blaris camps had been taken on the 7th, by the troops of "the republic," the time passed in all the fabled festivities of the tented field. At dusk, however, their mirth was turned to sadness. Some fugitives arrived, who announced their defeat on the evening of the 7th, at Antrim, and by the morning of the 9th, not one person remained on Bellavie to testify where this famous muster had been.

At Ballymena, the report of an insurrection breaking out had been whispered for some days previous to the 7th of June; and on the 6th, many of the disaffected of the town and neighbourhood were busied in shafting their pikes, and flinting their fire-arms. By the morning of the 7th, the alarm had become general, which, about 12 o'clock, was much increased by two prisoners being brought in by some yeomen from the neighbourhood of Portglenone; two had been taken that morning in the act of warning the people to rise in rebellion. At 2 o'clock, it was reported that the insurgents were advancing upon the town on the Broughshane road, and soon after, the Rev. William M'Claverty, a magistrate, accompanied by four yeomen cavalry, set out in that direction to learn if this report was true. About a mile forward, the insurgents were seen advancing in a dense column, who immediately com-

menced firing, on which the cavalry scampered off. Mr. M'Claverty's horse taking fright, and becoming restive, he was thrown off, and while lying from the effects of the fall, he was barbarously beaten by some of the insurgents. He was at length enabled to rise, and though wounded and besmeared with blood and dirt, was brought into Ballymena, amidst the most savage yells of exultation.

A little before Mr. M'Claverty's setting out, about 30 of the most respectable inhabitants, who, a few days before, had set down their names to assist, when necessary, in defence of the town, were summoned to attend at the market-house to take up arms. A few of these were really zealous loyalists, but the greater number had been called thither lest they should be available to the rebels, rather than from any aid expected from their services. Their fidelity was sooner put to the test than had been expected, for, on the report being spread of the capture of Mr. M'Claverty, the greater number of those collected, fled, while those who remained, with some four or five yeomen, entered the market-house, and securing the gates, took post in its upper or second story.

Presently a most discordant flourish of horns, conch-shells, and glass-trumpets or tubes, announced the entry of the insurgents at the head of the town or Church-street. Their front division were entirely armed with muskets, and were chiefly composed of the "Boys of the Braid," a district formerly pre-eminent for the number of its volunteer corps. Their numbers filled the street from side to side, and, as seen from the market-house, could not fail of impressing upon the few within, the folly of opposition. Some one, therefore, ventured to suggest the propriety of their immediate surrender, in case they were offered good terms. The mention of surrender roused the fiery indignation of Thos. Dickson, a schoolmaster, and a most determined loyalist, between whom and the disaffected of the town, there had for long existed the most inveterate hostility. He declared, with great vehemence, that however others might be disposed, he would never surrender his arms to rebels, and he proceeded to point out that they had nothing to fear, having plenty of ammunition and arms, and within good stone walls. His harangue was here broken off

by a volley from those without, which, however, from the low situation of the assailants, did no damage except breaking the glass of the windows, their shot having lodged in the ceiling of the room.

This salute was immediately answered from the market-house, but from their height above those in the street, their balls passed harmlessly over their heads, though, at the time, they appeared to have "done the state some service." Alarmed by the astounding peal and whistling of the balls overhead, those nearest the market-house endeavoured to get away, and, in the confusion that ensued, were thrown down. Their cries served to increase the confusion among the crowd, and many others, in their haste to get off, were also overthrown, and others again falling over them, several thousand persons were thus sprawling on the street, the greater number of whom supposed that all were slain, or at least *kilt*, but themselves!

During this confusion a considerable number are reported to have made off home, but the multitude, on recovering from their panic, and finding themselves really alive, as if ashamed of the strange confusion into which they had fallen, seemed anxious to renew their attack on the market-house, which, however, was again suspended by an equally unlooked for event.

On that morning a detachment of yeomen cavalry quartered in the town, had, with the exception of some six or seven, left it for the purpose of escorting two of their officers, who were magistrates, to Antrim, to attend a meeting of the magistracy, called by the governor of the county on that day. This service being performed, they had hastened back, and arrived at the end of the bridge leading into the town as the insurgents were about to arrange matters to renew their attack.—Astonished at the appearance of such a vast concourse, where, a few hours before, they had left all quiet, they stood undetermined how to act. To advance or retreat appeared equally hopeless and impracticable. Before them was an armed host, and, in their rear, they had seen the people everywhere in arms. While thus amazed, the pikemen rushed forward with savage yells, to whom the yeoman officer surrendered his sword, his men did the like, and were led off prisoners to the black-hole, and their commander to an adjoining ale-house.

Immediately after this achievement by the pikemen, the musketeers, in high spirits, resumed their assault upon the market-house. However, for some time they seemed to have scarcely surmounted their former fears, firing only when sheltered by the jambs of doors, and the corners of streets; but they at length took post in the opposite houses, from the windows of which they were enabled to fire into those of the market-house with greater safety and effect.

Throughout this warfare the interpid Davison, by his example, endeavoured to keep up the spirits of his companions, and fearing that balls might fall short, he husbanded his stock by firing from his blunderbuss, buttons cut from his coat, and nails taken from the walls. The iron gates below were at length forced open by sledges, and shots were discharged by those below up through the loft, and down in return, but without either producing any deadly effect. At this time a tar-barrel was also set on fire for the purpose of its being carried in beneath the loft, but as this service was deemed a kind of forlorn hope, the barrel was for some time suffered to waste its flame in the street.

At this time a man was observed sitting in the street, on a basket, with his head reclining upon his knees, and who appeared neither to see, hear, nor take an interest in the busy scene passing around him. He was on his way home from Dublin, where he had been defeated in a tedious lawsuit, and had come from Belfast that morning, bringing with him some flax on which he now rested. On coming into the town he had been taken prisoner by the *United Irishmen*, with whom he had no connection; a pike had been put into his hands, which now lay beside him, and he wished for any chance to mend his life, "or to be rid on't." His downcast and disordered looks had attracted the notice of some of those near him, one of whom gave him a hearty swill from a jug of whisky, telling him, at the same time, to keep up his heart for the sake of Ould Ireland, in whose cause they were now fighting. The spirits taken had began to operate upon him as a cry was raised, "will no one serve his country and carry the barrel under the market-house before it burns out." Roused by this appeal, he darted forward, seized the barrel, now half enveloped in flame, and threw it

beneath the loft. The admiring crowd gave three hearty cheers, and while they yet sounded, he grasped his basket, the crowd made way, and the next moment he was on his way to the Glynn!

The flame being fed by other persons, soon made its appearance through the floor, when all, except the heroic Davison, called out that they had surrendered, and ceased to fire. The firing, however, was still maintained from without, on which some of those within, slided down by a window in the rear, or made to descend into the street. In this attempt three persons were shot, as has been reported, through the obstinacy of Davison, who had not given in, but as the men killed had no arms, and had held up their hands to testify their submission, the tale appears an ill-founded excuse for their barbarity. However this may have been, Davison was at length secured, and, amidst the savage yells of exulting thousands, consigned with the other prisoners to the dungeon. In this affair, four of the loyalist party were slain, and several wounded. Only one of the rebels is said to have fallen, and of the number of their wounded no account has been obtained.

Emboldened by these successes, which were magnified into great victories, the multitude became more noisy and ferocious, and agreeably to their received notions of "liberty and equality," deemed themselves on the eve of the consummation of their schemes. One fellow, who, during the day, had been more conspicuous for his vociferation than deeds of arms, fired a ball through the gate leading to the mansion of Mr. Adair, lord of the soil, exclaiming that it should no longer be called Adair's place, but by his name. The wife of an old nailer, concluding that the grand revolution, so long talked of, was come at last, ordered her husband to look out for a "better house for folk to leeve in," but not to take an adjoining mansion near the brewery, "as it was a doomed hole," but to get one at the Hillhead. We do not learn how far her orders were complied with.

About 8 o'clock in the evening, James Dickey arrived from Randalstown, but last from Ahoghill, bringing with him a reinforcement from the latter village. He was on horseback, dressed in a green jacket, and wore a horseman's helmet, and

carried a sabre, and from his expressions and bustling activity, appeared to take a great interest in affairs. Though the defeat at Antrim must have been known to him, he seemed in high spirits, and if he made any communications to that effect, it must have been to very few.

The close of the evening passed in the noisy demonstrations of the victors, and the joyous tidings of their successes being spread abroad, the surrounding districts, during the night, poured forth their marshalled legions to the common rendezvous. At the same time, several of the new provincial executive directory, or, as they were called, committee, arrived at the head inn. Guards were formed, and sentinels placed on the different roads and avenues leading into the town, and none were permitted to depart without giving the countersign, which, on this night, was "Fitzgerald in the dark."

The streets were patrolled throughout the night by several thousands, accompanied by the beating of old drums, sounding of horns and conch shells, and, in fact, any thing that could make a noise, the discordant sounds of which were drowned at times by the screaming cheers of the multitude. Though the night was clear, the windows of each house were lighted up by order of the committee; while the glare and clashing of the rusty arms, as they passed, and their blasphemous songs, and shouts of liberty, recalled to the minds of some, the most ferocious scenes, as depicted in the public prints of the Parisian rabble. The only thing wanted to complete the picture, was a few dead bodies lying about, which, though overlooked at the time, were, nevertheless, forthcoming on the following day.

On the previous evening, the dungeon or blackhole, beneath the market-house, had been crowded with prisoners almost to suffocation. Early on the morning of the 8th, their cries for water and air were so excessive as to soften the hearts of some of the less obdurate of the guards, and the door was thrown open, while a strong guard was drawn up in its front. On these arrangements, a cry was raised by the crowd, "We'll murder Davison," and a number of the most ferocious ruffians advanced into the dungeon for the purpose of dragging him out. In this attempt they were completely foiled, as Davison defended himself so valiantly with a knife that he had secreted

up his sleeve, that seven or eight of the ruffians were severely wounded, and compelled to make a precipitate retreat. Defeated in this attempt, none others dared to advance against so formidable an opponent, but a number, with their guns cocked, ventured to the door of the dungeon, and with the most horrid imprecations, swore that they would fire into it, and destroy the whole, unless Davison was put out. In the distraction and terror of the moment, Davison was expelled, and his murderers were seen struggling with pikes, bayonets, and swords, who could pierce him first. For some hours after his body lay exposed in a filthy puddle, and while yet writhing in the agonies of death, some of those passing, who had not been present at this civic treat, gave him a stab, as they wittily said, "to try their pikes upon him."

A few hours afterwards, James Dickey arrived from Connor, where he had that morning murdered Samuel Parker, an inhabitant of that village, by stabbing him through the breast with a sword. The only charge against him was his being a loyalist. Dickey, on his arrival, repaired to the committee, and, soon after, accompanied by a ferocious armed crowd, repaired to the black-hole, and the prisoners were called out, as was said, to receive their sentence. William Crawford, a constable belonging to the town, on being stabbed by him, attempted to escape, calling for mercy, but he was knocked down by a pike, and while lying, his head was nearly struck off by Dickey with his sword, who, holding it up, exclaimed, "See what a clean cut I have made." The dead body was cast into the channel beside that of Davison, but they were soon after thrown on a car, and, amidst the fiendish exclamations of the multitude, cast into a pit that had been made to receive them, in the church-yard. It was observed that with these murders, the demand for green, or national cockades, greatly increased, and the cloth shops being soon cleared of their ribbons of that colour, some webs of green stuff were cut up into stripes in lieu to answer the demand.

About one o'clock, A.M., a great press and bustle among the crowd, accompanied by tremendous cheering, proclaimed the entrance of a numerous column, from the neighbourhood of Ballymoney. Their leaders were Callwell and Gunning, the

former of whom rode with a drawn sword in front, and judging from his looks, he was highly gratified with his new situation. They had assembled on the hill of Kilraught, where they had spent the previous night. On their way hither they had been joined by considerable bodies from Killymorris, Loughguile, Clough, and their respective neighbourhoods, who had gathered on the hill of Drumlurg, which, from that incident, has since been usually called the Pike-hill.

These divisions appeared to have been more provident than any of those by whom they had been preceded, bringing with them several cars laden with provisions, and wines taken from the cellers of some opulent aristocrats. These were said to be for the camp at Dunagore, but it is certain that no part of this good cheer reached that depot; the hampers of wine were soon emptied of their contents, the heads of the bottles struck off, and the wine drank or spilled in the streets. The hams, and other provisions, were disposed of in an equally summary manner. On the same day, some hampers of wine, which had lain for many years in the secluded cellers of the mansion of Mr. Adair, were also brought out to the street, and soon disposed of. Their contents, however, did not give that satisfaction to its consumers that might have been reasonably expected from its ancient vintage, as some of them swore that they would rather have had buttermilk or "bunyramer!"

The number of insurgents in Ballymena on this day, have been estimated at about ten thousand men, of whom, by far the greater number were armed with pikes, and the arms of many of the others as imperfect and rude as can well be imagined. Some carried old guns, which appeared most dangerous to those by whom they would have been discharged, and some were even without locks, which had perhaps fallen off. A few carried peat spades or scythes, tied on a pole, some old reaping hooks, harrow pins, or bayonets, fastened in a similar manner; others carried pitchforks—one was observed with an iron spindle tied upon an undressed stick—and some 150, who, from their unprepared state, had probably been pressed into the service, were without any offensive weapons whatever. In fact, the whole, from their conduct, seemed ra-

ther a savage horde let loose, than men, come, as they said, to look for their rights.

The junto, or executive, who directed all movements, and received all messages, acquainted with the defeat at Antrim, had probably begun to contemplate the desperate state of their affairs, as upon this day they remained close in the inn, and rarely appeared at the door or in the streets. It was even whispered, that discord already pervaded their councils, those merely *United Irishmen* blaming those who were defenders for having goaded them into a premature insurrection, which they now alleged must lead to their inevitable ruin.

About three o'clock, P.M., an active looking man, in genteel apparel, came posting into the town on horseback, inquiring for the committee, and was immediately taken to their quarters. In a few minutes after, he appeared on the street with two members of that body, who announced, to the wondering crowd, the surprise of the castle of Carrickfergus by their friends, and his dear friend on his right was the bearer of the happy news. This joyous intelligence was proclaimed by the deafening shouts of thousands, and had probably come in good time, for, in spite of all the care taken by the committee to keep any disastrous news from being spread, it had been given out by some stragglers, that their friends had been worsted at Antrim; and the evasive answers made to the inquiries of its truth, had served to confirm the reports that had been raised.

Soon after, the stranger, who rumour now honoured with the rank of a general from the enemy's ranks, came from the inn accompanied with the members of the committee, and the commanders of corps were ordered to muster them in the street. As many as could be found were formed into line, when the stranger took the command, and proceeded to arrange and exercise in their turn, both gunsmen and pikemen, with all the alertness of a regular disciplinarian.

At dusk, two of the committee, accompanied by the stranger, rode out to examine the outposts, which, in the evening, had been farther extended, in order to prevent surprise. Talking over the occurrences of the day, and their projected plan of defence, they had exceeded the line of posts on the Randalstown road, when their companion perceiving that they would

go no farther that way, put spurs to his horse, and was soon out of sight, while his late friends, not a little alarmed, returned in haste to their quarters.

This night proved much quieter than that of the preceding, as the patrolling in the streets had been nearly laid aside. The defeat at Antrim was generally known, and several groups stole off from the service, in which all now declared they had been pressed into, by persons they knew not whom, who came from they knew not where. Some leaders, also, took counsel from the general growing fears, and also made off, and, to use a poetic phrase,

"Fled full soon, and bade the rest keep fighting."

On the morning of the 9th, though the committee still continued in their quarters at the inn, confusion there, also, began to reign, and the members were seen running in and out like rabbits in a warren, making inquiries about news at every one they met, and whispering with one another. As the day advanced, the disorder was heightened by a report that the light battalion, which had been encamped at Shane's castle on the evening of the 8th, were about to advance upon Ballymena by the way of Toome. Bodies of hundreds together were now seen making off without ceremony; but thousands still lingered in the streets, evidently overwhelmed with confusion, and undetermined how to proceed. At twilight a shout was raised, "Let those who are for the camp at Dunagore hold up their hands," and after much sturdy shouting in this way, about 200 persons, all bearing fire-arms, took the road leading to Dunagore, while each road leading from the town appeared equally thronged with the promiscuous flight of the fugitives, among whom were seen some of the grand committee!

At Kells, they determined on halting for the night, and a report being spread that the army was advancing from Antrim, an ambuscade was laid for them, under the direction of Larry Dempsey, but as no part of the army came, his preparations for their reception were in vain.

By the 10th their numbers were still farther reduced, several having retired during the night, and on a consultation held of the parties, various plans were purposed, but none of them meeting with general approbation, others also made off to

shift as they could. Ninety-nine persons, all of whom were believed good men and true, however, still remained with their leader, Henry Joy M'Cracken, but these still appeared equally undetermined what course to pursue; but at length it was determined to seek shelter, until they should learn farther news, in the fastnesses of Slemish, about five miles east of Kells.

On the morning of Sunday, the 10th, not a stranger was to be seen in Ballymena, though some of the leaders of the insurgents were secreted in the neighbourhood, being afraid to return home. Few inhabitants were seen on the streets, though the public were in a constant state of alarm, by reports that the army were coming to burn the town for the part they had taken in the rebellion; though all now declared that the rebels were utter strangers, who had come from no one knew where, and had gone off none knew whither. At length on the 11th, these reports were, in a certain measure, realised; the light battalion, under the orders of Colonel Clavering, of the Argyle fencibles, entered the town, and were halted on the lawn in front of the mansion of Mr. Adair, and the gate closed. Immediately after, the inhabitants were required to furnish a refreshment for the troops, but this order not being attended to, they were informed, that if provisions were not immediately sent in, the soldiers would be permitted to find provisions for themselves. This intimation soon produced an ample supply, and in about an hour afterwards, the troops were again in motion, retiring by the same road they came.

The small party of M'Cracken continued several days in the vicinity of Slemish, and, in a marshy spot, beneath the southern brow of this mountain, they dug a well, called by their leader's name, and on some stones adjoining, are still seen his initials, and those of some of his followers. During their stay the heath was their bed, and the sky their only canopy, and each night their numbers were thinned by desertion, so that, in a few days, they were reduced to about 30. On the evening of the 14th, a special messenger named M'Cann, arrived from the insurgent camp, near Saintfield, who announced, in glowing colours, the prosperous state of their affairs in Down. The party, in joyous expectation, immediately decamped for

the purpose of passing into Down, by Shaw's bridge, by which route the messenger had come. At dusk they reached the mountain of Little Collin, and a report being spread that they were come to organize a new "turn out," the men actually fled as if an army had been at their heels, though, at this time, the numbers of M'Cracken were reduced to 22 persons. In their progress, they purposed to pass a little westward of Ballyclare, and on coming near that town they heard the sentinels of a guard, composed of the inhabitants, who were placed on the road, challenging such persons as advanced. This proceeding roused the indignation of our travellers, for though this guard was formed for the ostensible purpose of opposing the rebels, without one exception, the members had been only a few days before deeply engaged in the rebellion. A halt was now called by M'Cracken, and on counting their numbers one was found absent, and as he was above suspicion of having ran away, it was supposed, that being a stranger, he had missed his way down the fields, and had fallen into the hands of the guard. Determined, therefore, on the rescue of their comrade, they advanced briskly, and in a few minutes disarmed the sentinels and guard. This accomplished, it was purposed by some to inflict an exemplary punishment on some of those audacious apostates, but after some threats, the design was given up, and it being evident that their comrade had taken French leave, the party proceeded on their way.

Slanting across the country in the direction of Roughfort, about daylight they arrived on the confines of the parish of Derriaghy, where they were informed of the defeat of their friends at Ballinahinch. Their situation was now deemed by all desperate in the extreme, and after a short consultation, it was agreed that they should disperse, on which the greater number buried, or threw away their arms, each man shifting for himself as he could.

A few days afterwards, M'Cracken and two of his associates, Watt and Queeny, were accidentally taken by the Carrickfergus cavalry, when crossing the commons near that town. The former was immediately tried by a court-martial, and suffered the extreme penalty of the law in Belfast on the 17th of July, and his two companions were, by the same court, sentenced to

be transported, but after a long imprisonment, were permitted to transport themselves to America.

In the northern parts of the county of Antrim, none of the disaffected appeared in arms until the morning of the 8th. At Ballycastle, that day was spent in mustering their forces, while the yeomen corps of the neighbourhood, unable to offer resistance to such an host, retired to Coleraine. In that town were then quartered the Manx fencible regiment, and some corps of yeomen, who had retired thither. The inhabitants subscribing £150 to repair the old earthen ramparts of the town, and the military being on the alert, the disaffected were thus awed into subjection, and no hostile assemblage of the insurgents took place in that neighbourhood.

At Ballycastle the insurgents were no sooner in arms, than they began to turn their thoughts towards the property of their neighbours. Immediately after, and while they were only mustering, one of their leaders, in passing a gentleman's house, struck the door a smart slap with his sword, exclaiming, in a loud voice, "This is mine." In his progress, he passed the Chapel of Ease, which he struck, using a similar expression —adding, that he would put out the present parson, and put in another, who he then named. Thus proving, although a Roman Catholic, that he had no intention of destroying the church, but only to change its patronage!

At Portglenone, Rasharkin, and their neighbourhoods, the *United Irishmen* were in a great measure overawed by the yeomen and loyalists. The latter was chiefly engaged in guarding the pass over the river Bann, at Port-neal bridge, and afterwards in an attempt to barricade, or throw that bridge down, the rebels being reported to be in great force in the county of Derry. However, on the dispersion of the insurgents on the morning of the 8th, at Maghera, their numbers at the bridge were greatly increased, thousands flocking thither, under the pretext of being loyalists, but who had really been wielding the pike only a few hours before at Maghera.

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